メトロ No.104

山崎峰水 housui yamazaki

3

3 MAIL

STORY AND ART
HOUSUI YAMAZAKI

ORIGINAL COVER DESIGN
BUNPEI YORIFUJI

TRANSLATION
DOUGLAS VARENAS

EDITOR AND ENGLISH ADAPTATION
CARL GUSTAV HORN

LETTERING AND TOUCH-UP
IHL

DARK HORSE MANGA™

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YOU'RE HERE... JUST AS I THOUGHT...
キュッ
チリーン
DEAD AND IMPURE SPIRIT OF THE DECEASED ...
ONCE AGAIN BECOMING AN EVIL SPIRIT, MENACING THIS WORLD. THIS WILL NOT STAND...
WITH THIS SPIRIT GUN CALLED KAGUTSUCHI ...

MAIL#14
MIKOTO

THE GRASS WAS SO HIGH IT WOULD HAVE HIDDEN ME...BUT THERE WAS NO ONE ELSE AROUND TO SEE.
I WAS STAYING HERE FOR THE SUMMER, AND NOT A LOCAL BOY.
THE SHRILL SHRIEKS OF CICADAS WERE DOING THEIR BEST TO DROWN MY FOOTSTEPS...
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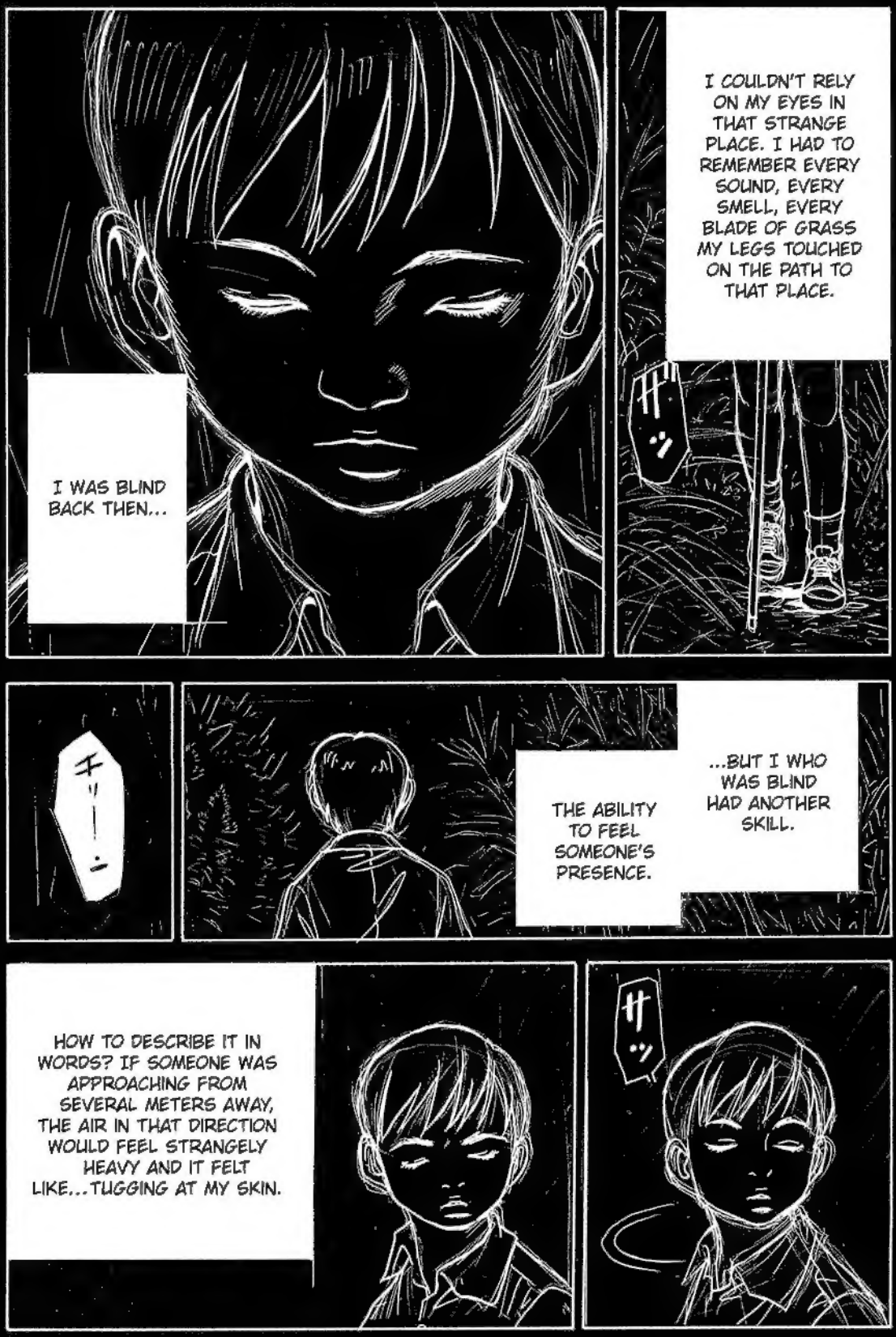
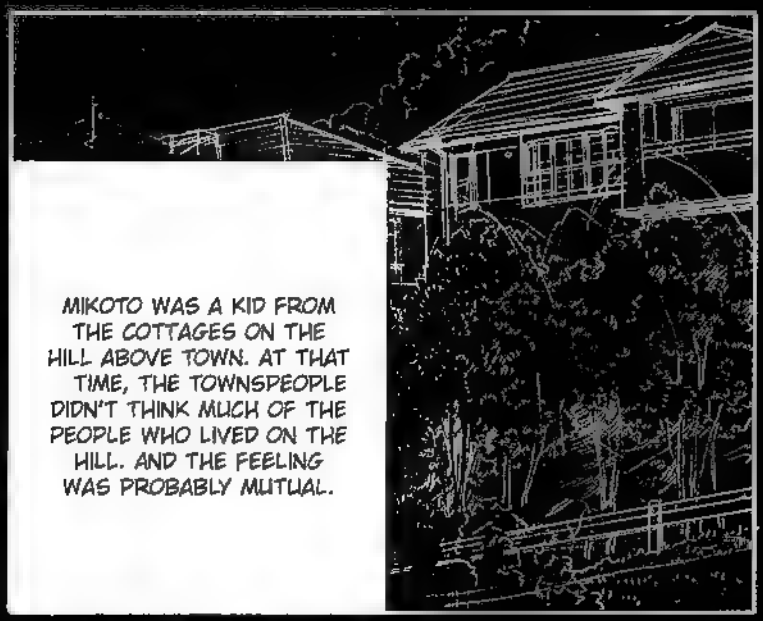
ミアアア
ミ゛ャアアア
...BUT I COULD HEAR THE SOUND OF SURF FROM THE OCEAN, SO I NEVER LOST MY WAY.
ざあん


I WAS BLIND BACK THEN...
I COULDN'T RELY ON MY EYES IN THAT STRANGE PLACE. I HAD TO REMEMBER EVERY SOUND, EVERY SMELL, EVERY BLADE OF GRASS MY LEGS TOUCHED ON THE PATH TO THAT PLACE.
ザッ
チリーン
THE ABILITY TO FEEL SOMEONE'S PRESENCE.
...BUT I WHO WAS BLIND HAD ANOTHER SKILL.
HOW TO DESCRIBE IT IN WORDS? IF SOMEONE WAS APPROACHING FROM SEVERAL METERS AWAY, THE AIR IN THAT DIRECTION WOULD FEEL STRANGELY HEAVY AND IT FELT LIKE...TUGGING AT MY SKIN.
ザッ

IT'S YOU OVER THERE, ISN'T IT, MIKOTO?
ON MY BRAIDS? OH, YEAH... WELL... RIGHT.
HA HA HA
チリーン
チリン
I WAS HIDING BUT YOU STILL FOUND ME...
チリーン
IT DOESN'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE IF YOU HIDE...AND YOUR BELLS MAKE NOISE ANYWAY.


MIKOTO WAS A KID FROM THE COTTAGES ON THE HILL ABOVE TOWN. AT THAT TIME, THE TOWNSPEOPLE DIDN'T THINK MUCH OF THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED ON THE HILL. AND THE FEELING WAS PROBABLY MUTUAL.

HER NAME WAS MIKOTO HYAKKE. I HAD MET HER THAT SUMMER, AND WE BECAME FRIENDS...

BECAUSE OF THAT, THERE WASN'T ANYWHERE ELSE WE COULD MEET...AND WE KEPT OUR FRIENDSHIP A SECRET.

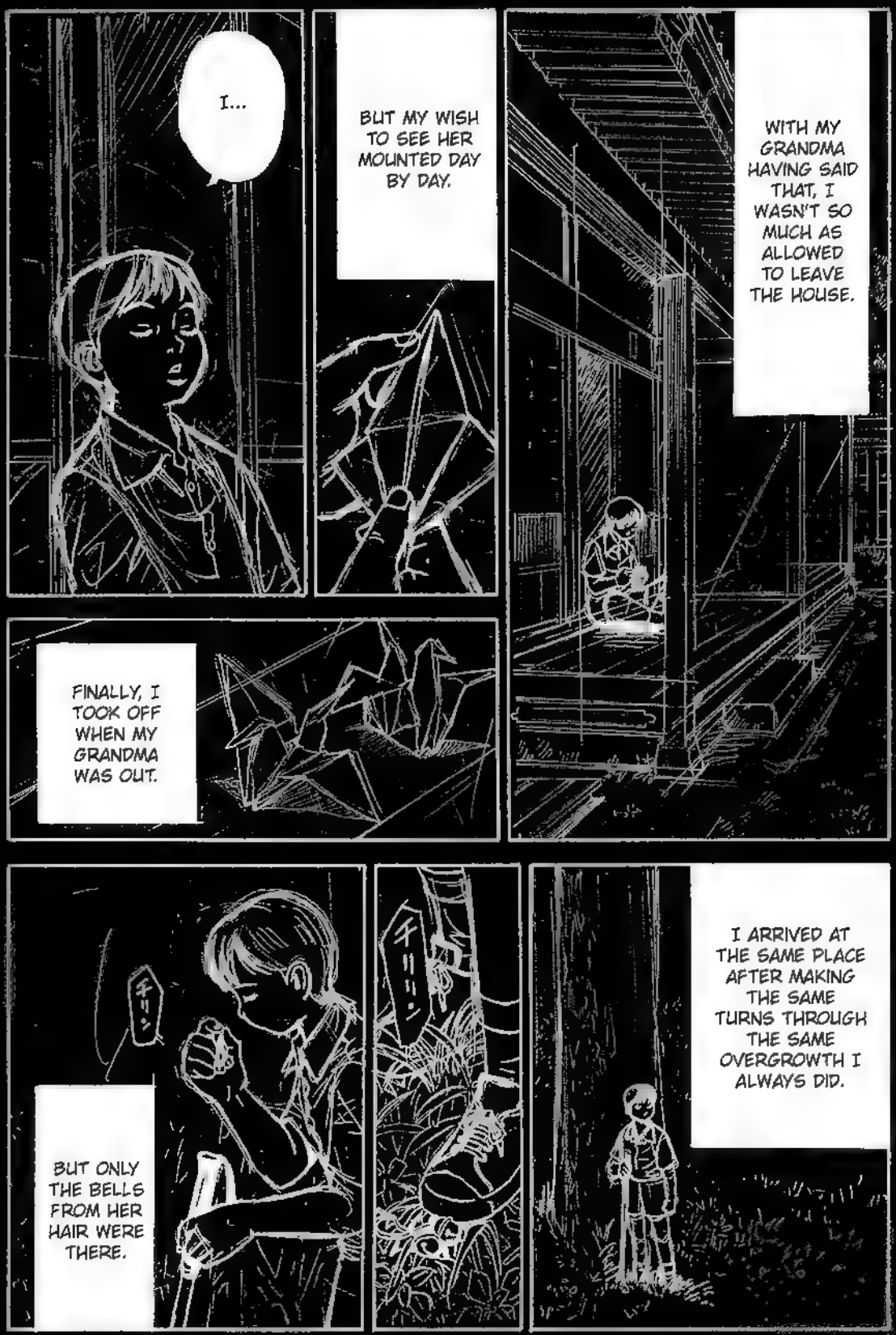
COME HERE...
AH...

SAY, WHAT DO YOU LOOK LIKE, MIKOTO?
UM...

...

...YOUR FACE...
UH... UM...
WELL... DO YOU THINK I'M UGLY...?
...NO.
hee-hee, THAT'S GOOD.
OUT OF THE BLUE, WE PROMISED TO BE FRIENDS FOREVER.

REIJI, WHERE DID YOU GO? GRANDMA WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
AND IT WAS RIGHT AFTER THAT SHE STOPPED COMING TO OUR SECRET PLACE.
I'M HOME...
...TOWARD SENBARA...
YOU WENT ALL THE WAY THERE, EVEN THOUGH YOU CAN'T SEE?! FOR GOODNESS' SAKE, REIJI.
M-MURDERS...
LATELY, THERE'S BEEN SOME MURDERS IN THAT AREA.
ANYWAY, I DON'T WANT YOU GOING THERE AGAIN.
W...WHY?

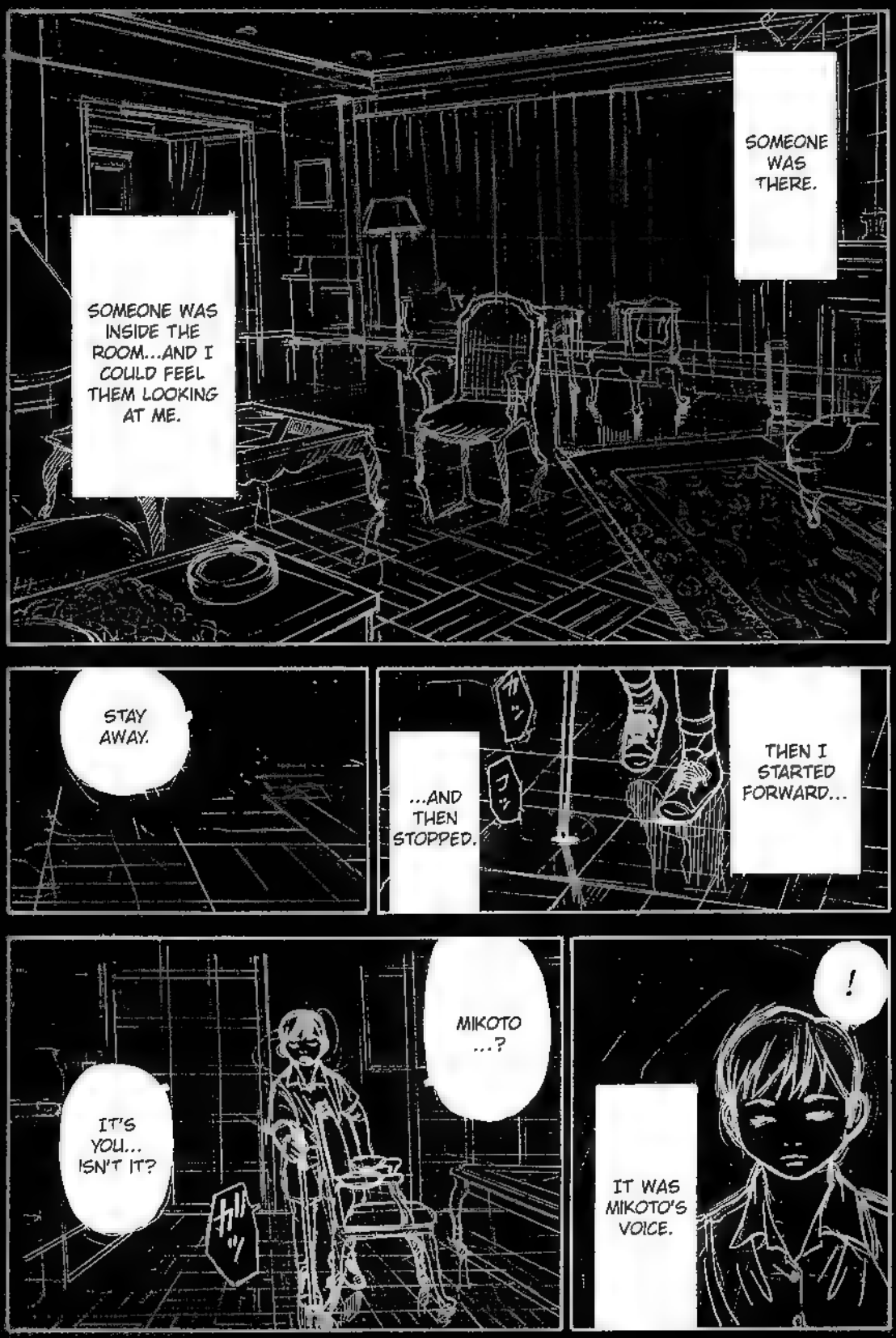

I...
BUT MY WISH TO SEE HER MOUNTED DAY BY DAY.
WITH MY GRANDMA HAVING SAID THAT, I WASN'T SO MUCH AS ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE HOUSE.
FINALLY, I TOOK OFF WHEN MY GRANDMA WAS OUT.
チリン
チリン
BUT ONLY THE BELLS FROM HER HAIR WERE THERE.
I ARRIVED AT THE SAME PLACE AFTER MAKING THE SAME TURNS THROUGH THE SAME OVERGROWTH I ALWAYS DID.

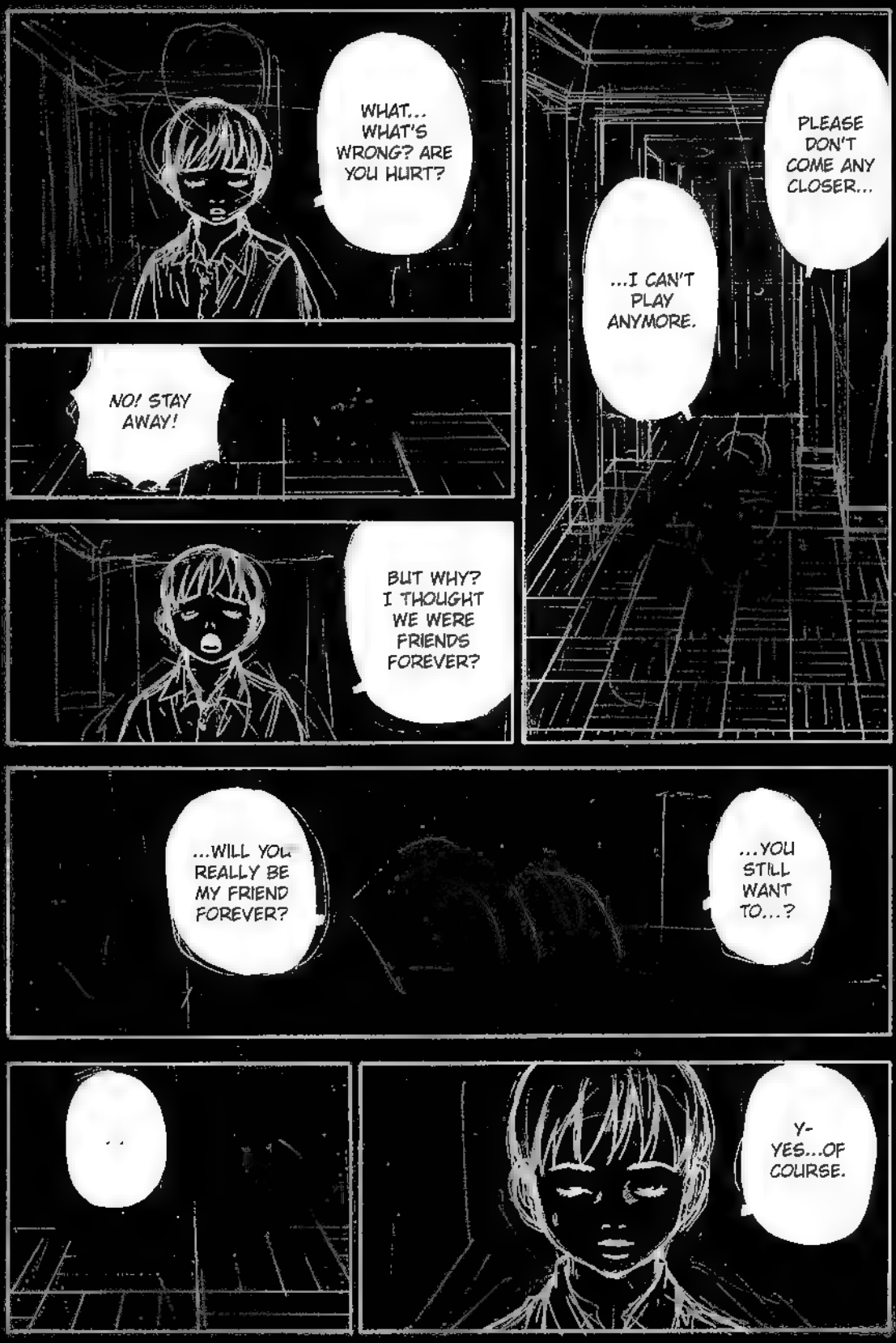
I STOOD THERE FOR A LONG TIME, SLOWLY THINKING ABOUT HOW SHE MIGHT HAVE GONE AWAY INSTEAD, LIKE I WOULD AFTER THE SUMMER.
THAT MAYBE SHE HAD COME ONE LAST TIME, AND LEFT THE BELLS FOR ME.
YOU UNDER-STAND--I THOUGHT IT WAS THE PLACE. I HAD THOUGHT I COULD SEE HER ANYTIME, IF ONLY I WENT TO THE PLACE.
チリン
BUT THEN I FELT HER.
I HAD TO BE BRAVE. IT WAS IN A WAY I'D NEVER GONE BEFORE, AND I SHIVERED AS I MADE MY WAY SLOWLY UP THE PATH.
ﾂﾂﾂ

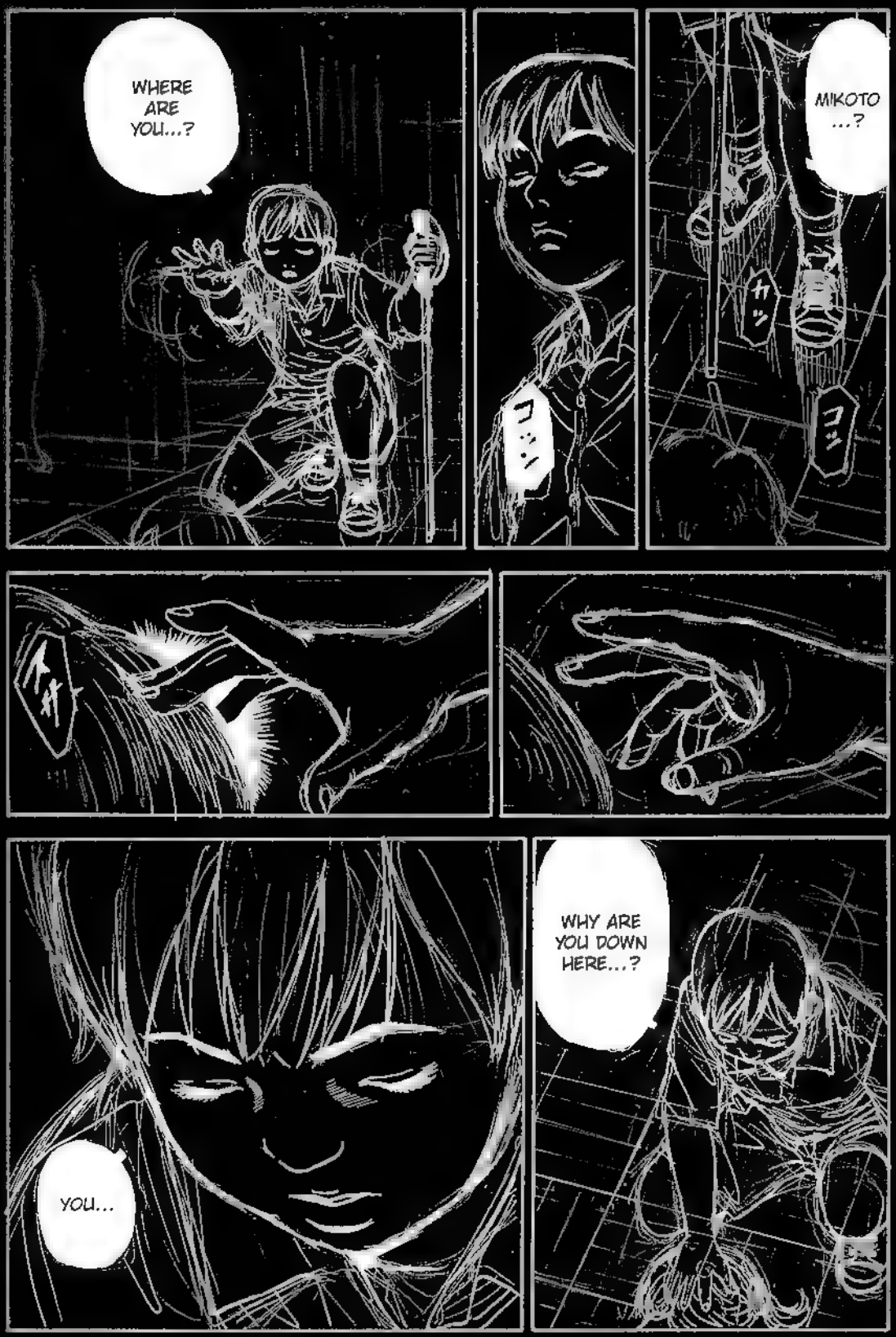
ギイィ
IT WAS HALF OPEN TO START WITH, AND I COULD ENTER.
BUT ONLY A FEW MINUTES OF WALKING TOOK MY CANE TO AN IRON GATE.
カァン
BUT THE GRASS ONLY CONTINUED INSIDE THE GATE, ITS THICK SCENT EVERYWHERE AROUND THE HOUSE. WAS THIS REALLY A PLACE WHERE SOMEONE LIVED?

I FELT COLD DESPITE THE DAY. AND THERE WAS NO MORE SMELL OF GRASS IN HERE.
IT WAS THE SOUND OF SOMETHING BEING EATEN.
I COULD GO IN THE DOOR, TOO.
NOW I BEGAN TO HEAR SOMETHING LOUD IN THE DISTANCE.
IT SMELLED VERY BAD.
AS I DID, THE SOUNDS STOPPED, LIKE I FLIPPED A SWITCH.
WH... WHO'S THERE?
...I SAID, DESPITE MYSELF.

THEY RAN PAST ME...
...OUT INTO THE GRASS...
I HAD SCARED THE DOGS SOMEHOW, LIKE THEY KNEW THEY WERE DOING WRONG.
...BUT I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO ENTER NOW.
THAT FEELING I TALKED ABOUT... TUGGING AT MY SKIN.
...BUT I STILL FELT IT.
IT WAS SO QUIET IN THE ROOM...


SOMEONE WAS THERE.
SOMEONE WAS INSIDE THE ROOM...AND I COULD FEEL THEM LOOKING AT ME.
STAY AWAY.
...AND THEN STOPPED.
THEN I STARTED FORWARD...
MIKOTO ...?
IT'S YOU... ISN'T IT?
!
IT WAS MIKOTO'S VOICE.


WHAT... WHAT'S WRONG? ARE YOU HURT?
PLEASE DON'T COME ANY CLOSER...
...I CAN'T PLAY ANYMORE.
NO! STAY AWAY!
BUT WHY? I THOUGHT WE WERE FRIENDS FOREVER?
...WILL YOU REALLY BE MY FRIEND FOREVER?
...YOU STILL WANT TO...?
...
Y- YES...OF COURSE.


WHERE ARE YOU...?
MIKOTO ...?
カン
ヨシ
ナオ
YOU...
WHY ARE YOU DOWN HERE...?

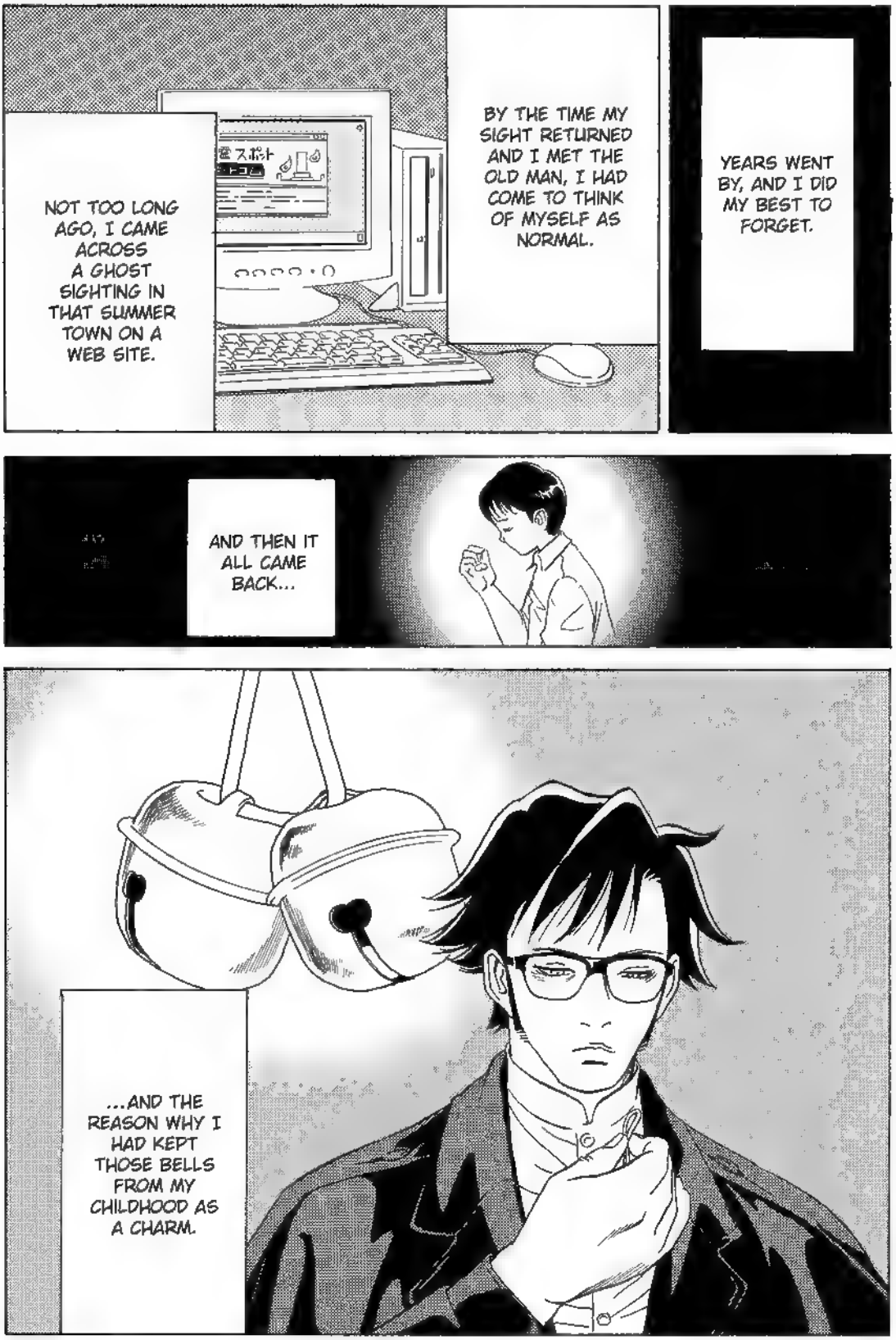
THE TOUCH--IT WAS CURIOUSLY HEAVY... SOFTENED, A LITTLE BLOATED.
THE SMELL WAS BAD, BUT I HADN'T THOUGHT IT WAS HER. SHE WAS TALKING, AFTER ALL.

AND YET...
...IT WAS DEFINITELY HER FACE.
YOU THINK I FELT HORROR. I FELT SHOCK. THE *HORROR* I FELT NEXT...
...WHEN I COULD FEEL HER FACE SHIFT INTO A SMILE.

...I'M SO HAPPY...

...YOU'LL BE MY FRIEND FOREVER.

ゴトン
ゴ
ゴロ
I FOUND OUT LATER THAT HER ENTIRE FAMILY HAD BEEN MURDERED BY BURGLARS.
AAA AAA!!
BUT THAT WASN'T WHY I SCREAMED THEN.
IT WAS BECAUSE I KNEW THAT A POWER WITHIN ME HAD MADE HER DEAD FLESH GRIN.


NOT TOO LONG AGO, I CAME ACROSS A GHOST SIGHTING IN THAT SUMMER TOWN ON A WEB SITE.
BY THE TIME MY SIGHT RETURNED AND I MET THE OLD MAN, I HAD COME TO THINK OF MYSELF AS NORMAL.
YEARS WENT BY, AND I DID MY BEST TO FORGET.
AND THEN IT ALL CAME BACK...
...AND THE REASON WHY I HAD KEPT THOSE BELLS FROM MY CHILDHOOD AS A CHARM.

REI
MY NAME IS REI AKIBA

YOU'RE HERE... JUST AS I THOUGHT...
キィッ
チリ〜ン
ONCE AGAIN BECOMING AN EVIL SPIRIT, MENACING THIS WORLD.
THIS WILL NOT STAND...
WITH THIS SPIRIT GUN CALLED KAGUTSUCHI...
...I SEND YOU TO THE UNDER-WORLD.

DON'T YOU REMEMBER OUR PROMISE
FOR FOR
FOREVER
THAT WE'D BE FRIENDS

I REMEMBERED.
AND THAT PROMISE BOUND YOUR GHOST TO THIS WORLD. MY MISTAKE. I WAS YOUNG
コーン
コン
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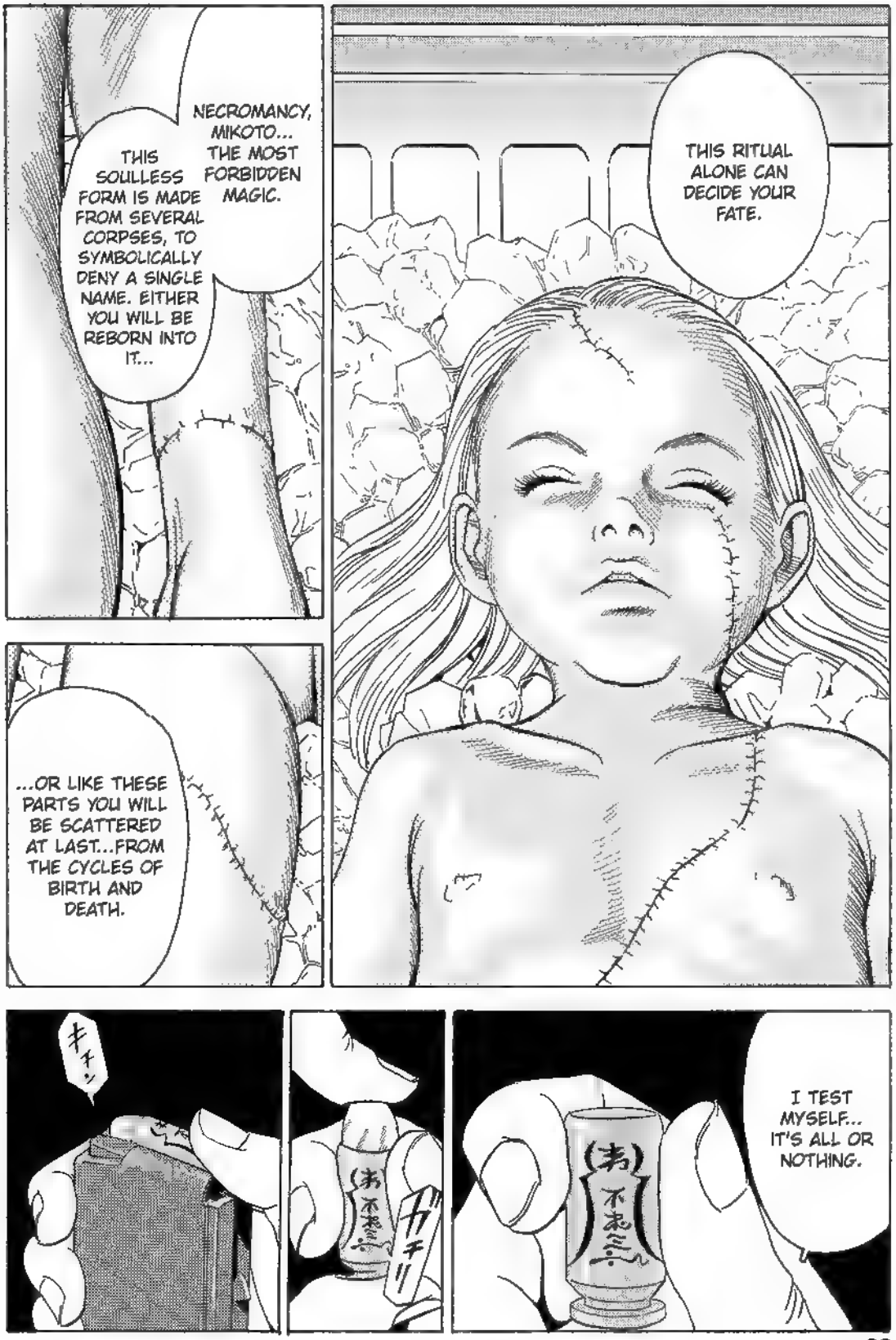
アアアア
..I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS DOING.
EITHER YOUR SPIRIT SHOULD FIND NEW FLESH TO LIVE AGAIN...
...OR IT SHOULD DIE AT LAST.


NECROMANCY, MIKOTO... THE MOST FORBIDDEN MAGIC.
THIS SOULLESS FORM IS MADE FROM SEVERAL CORPSES, TO SYMBOLICALLY DENY A SINGLE NAME. EITHER YOU WILL BE REBORN INTO IT...
THIS RITUAL ALONE CAN DECIDE YOUR FATE.
...OR LIKE THESE PARTS YOU WILL BE SCATTERED AT LAST...FROM THE CYCLES OF BIRTH AND DEATH.
キィン
ガチリ
I TEST MYSELF... IT'S ALL OR NOTHING.

WITH THIS SPIRIT GUN CALLED KAGUTSUCHI...
O HOUSELESS GHOST! I OFFER YOU THIS VOTIVE OF THE DEAD, INVITING THE UNDEPARTED TO DWELL WITHIN.
...I BRING YOU BACK TO LIFE.

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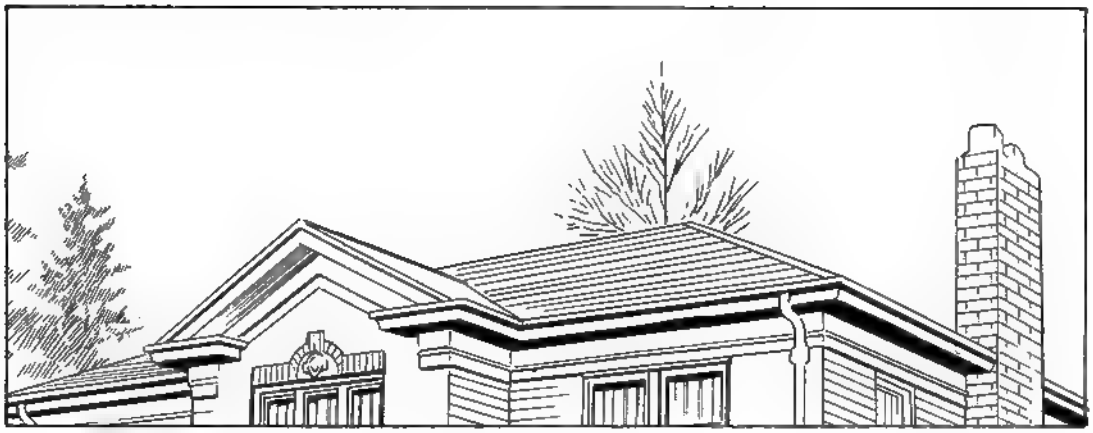
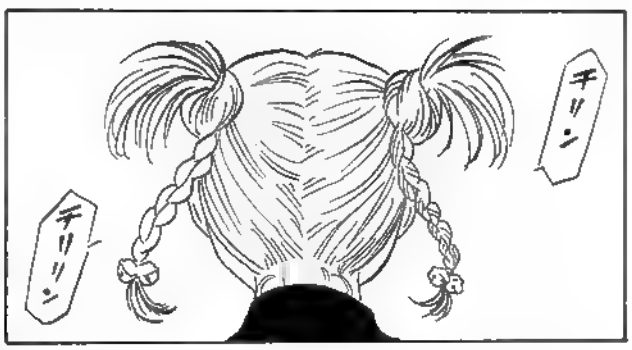
YOU'RE GONE.




チリン
チリリン

YOU KEPT YOUR PROMISE, AKIBA.
I HAD TO, MIKOTO...IT'S JUST MY KIND OF PROMISES... ARE HARD TO KEEP.

MAIL#14···END

SHORT MAIL #14.5
MOANING

IT'S BEEN ONLY A FEW DAYS SINCE MIKOTO CAME BACK FROM THE DEAD...
...YET IT WAS A RETURN NOT TO SAFETY... BUT TO THE DANGERS OF THIS STRANGE NEW LIFE.

キンコーン
キンコーン
キンコーン
ペタ
キンコーン
キンコーン
チリン
チリン

, I'll be gone
omorrow. The
that's been made
house your spirit will
prone to attracting
hosts. Be sure to
take care and look
after the house.
-Reiji Akiba
hikoto, I'll be gone
until tomorrow. The
body that's been made
to house your spirit wi
be prone to attracting
ghosts. Be sure to
take care and look
after the house.
-Reiji Akiba
チリン
キーン
コーーーン
ガチャ
ブロロロロオン
オオオオン
ガコンゴレン
WHAT THE HELL! I KNOW SOMEBODY'S HOME!

オギャアア
オギャアア
ピーポー
ピーポー
ドドド
ゴゴゴオン
IT'S AWFUL. THE GUTTER'S BLOCKED... THE WHOLE NEIGHBOR-HOOD IS...
REALLY... FLOODED WITH WATER YOU SAY!
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オギャアア
オギャアア
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カチャ
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HELLO
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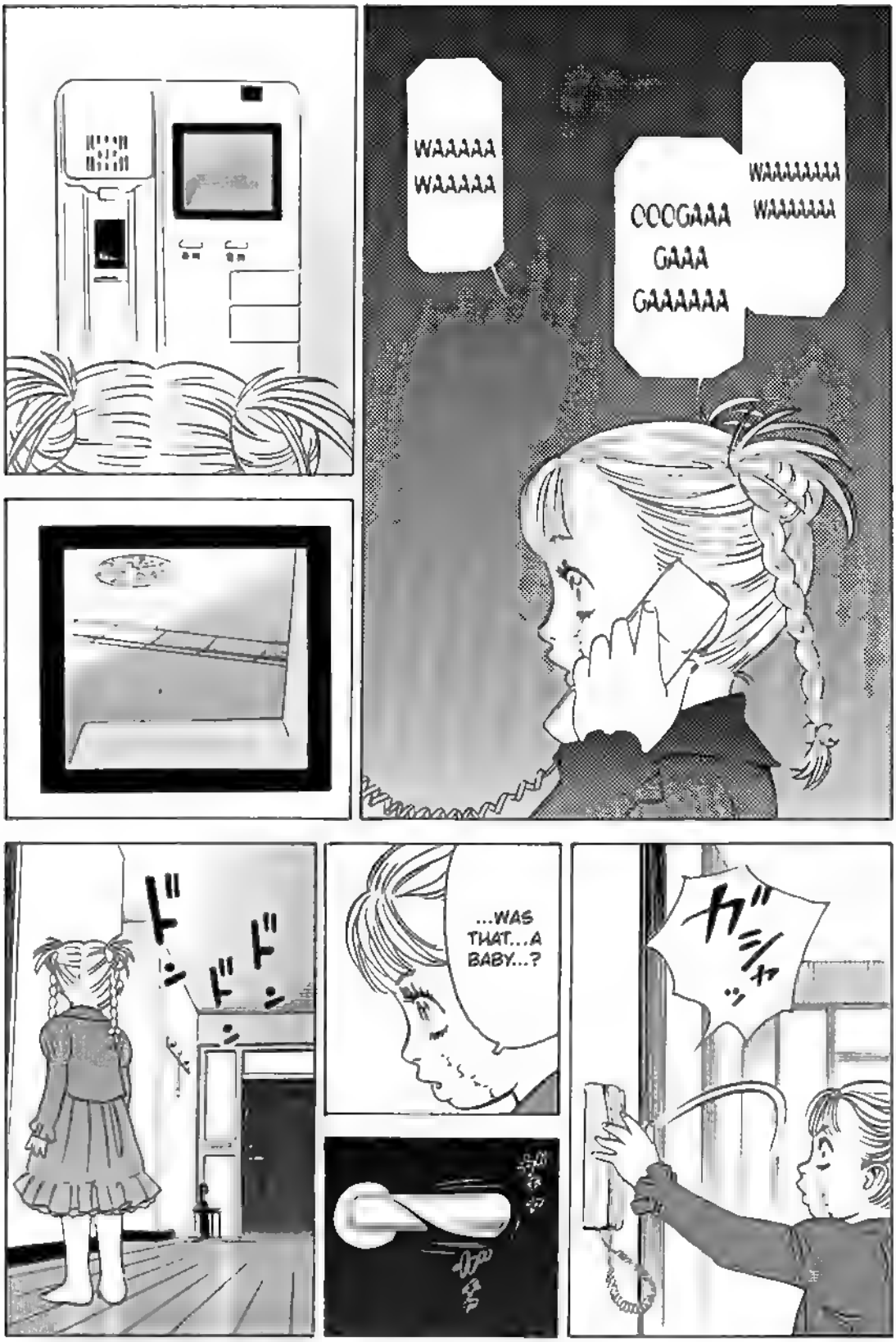
WAAAAA
WAAAAA
WAAAAAAAA
WAAAAAAA
OOOGAAA
GAAA
GAAAAAA
ドン ドン ドン
...WAS THAT...A BABY...?
ガシャッ

ギッ
タッ
ドン
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ミャアアアア
ガチッ
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REALLY...FLOODED WITH WATER YOU SAY!
IT'S AWFUL. THE GUTTER'S BLOCKED...THE WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD IS...
オギャ
オギャアア

ゴポン
ゴボボボッ
ゴポッ
ガボッ
ゴポッ
ゴポン……
コト

オギャアアア
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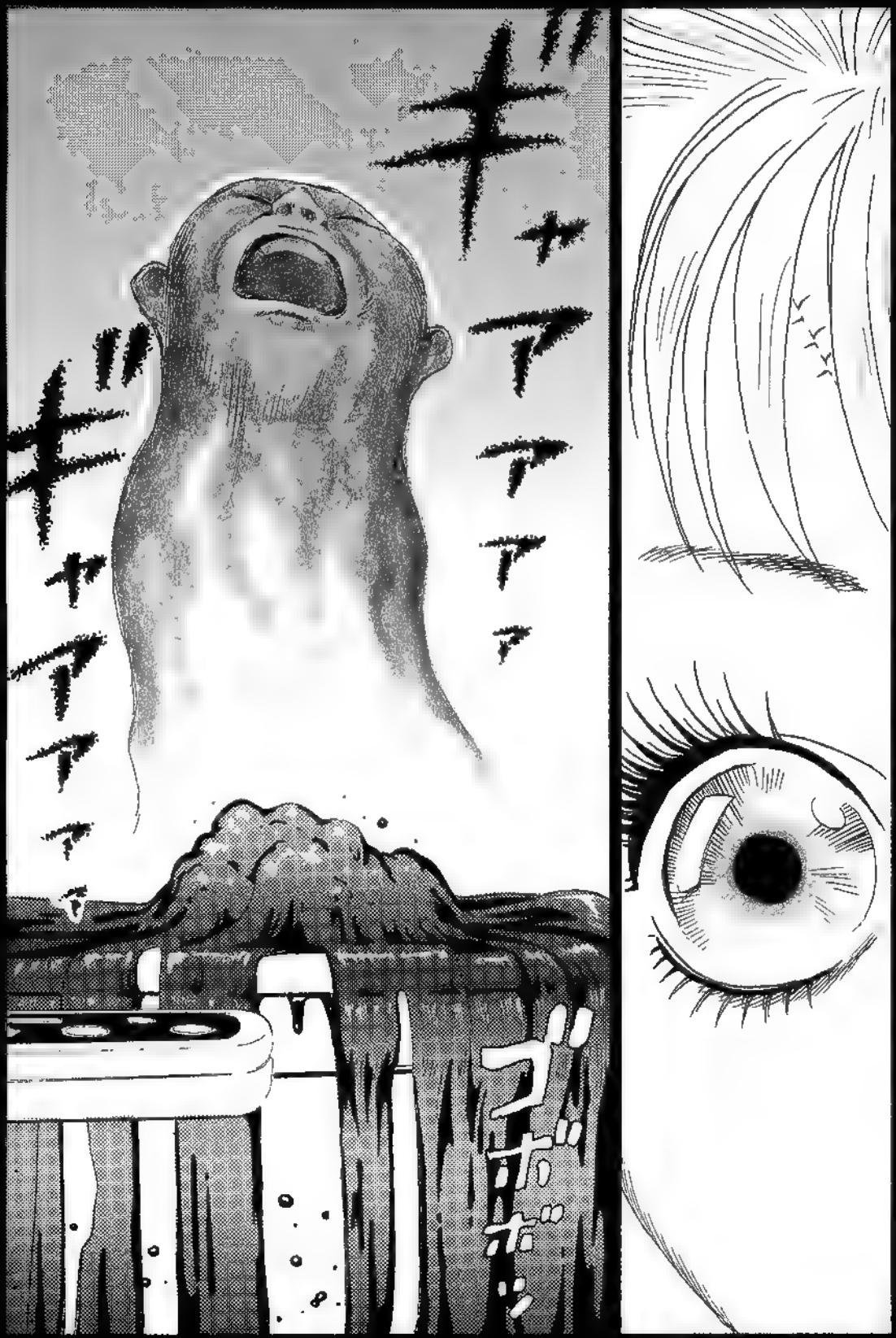
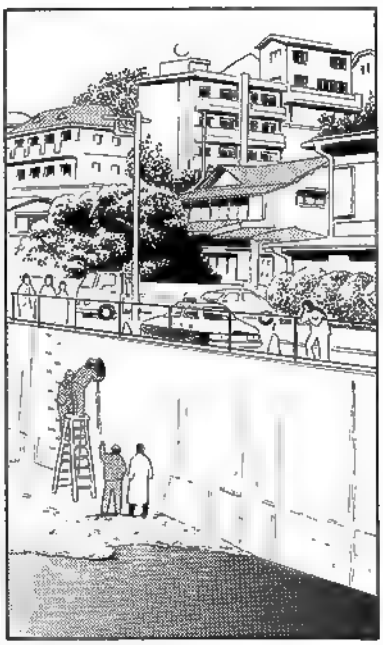
ギャアアアア
ドロリ

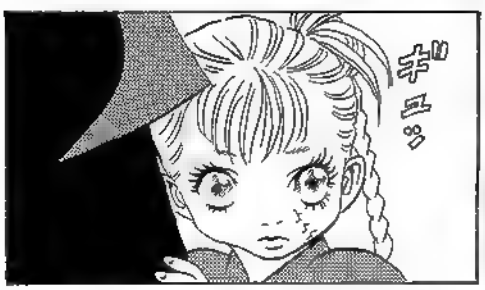

キャアアアア
キャアアアア
ゴボボ

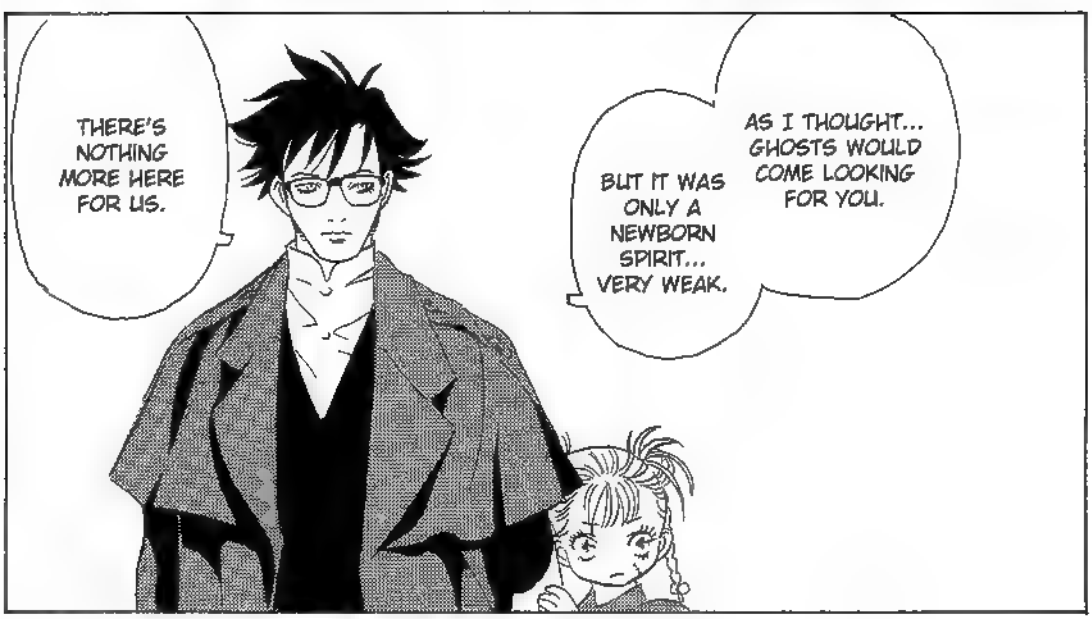
I VANQUISH YOU!

WAYWARD SPIRIT! BY THE GOD KAGUTSUCHI'S REALM OF FOUR SOULS...

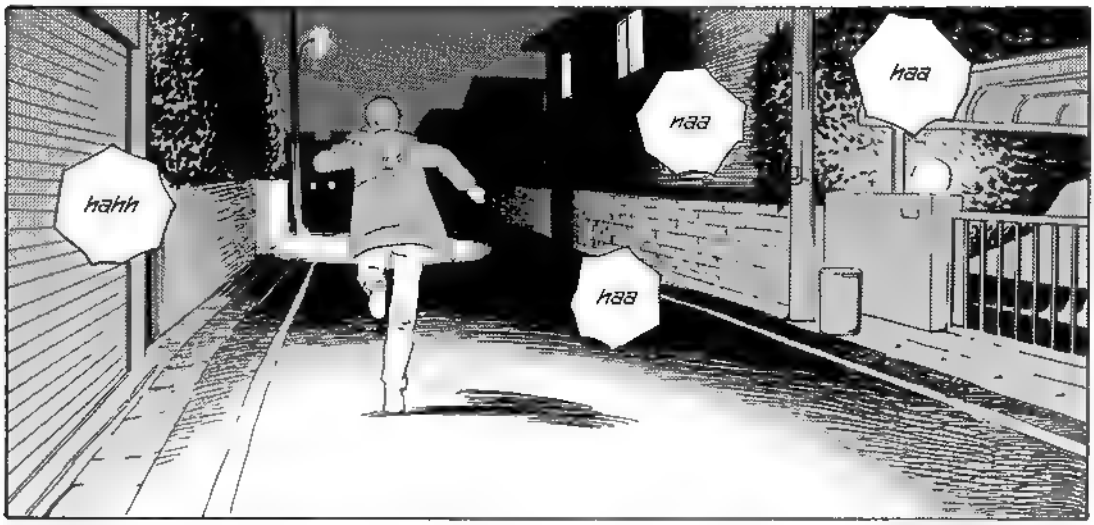
I'M SORRY THAT IT HAD TO BE THIS PLACE...
...BUT YOU SEE...
...THIS PLACE IS A RESTRICTED REALM...ONE THAT AKIBA CREATED FOR ME.
YOU CANNOT ENTER.

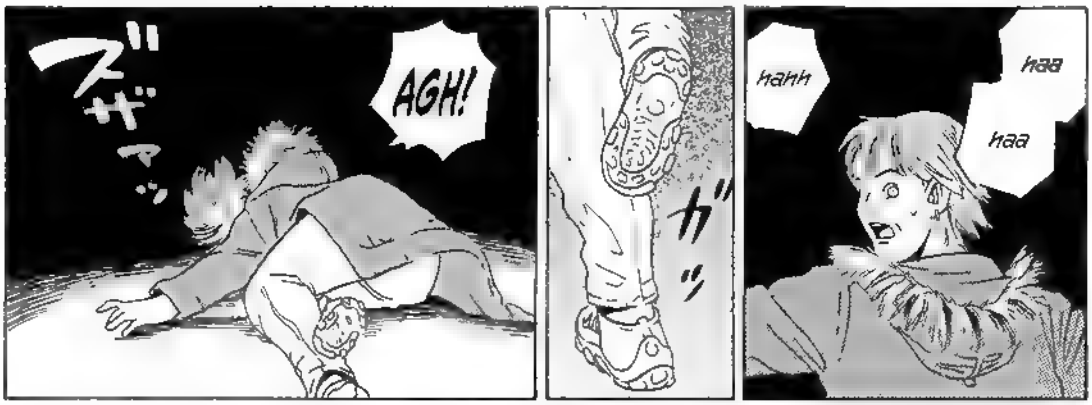


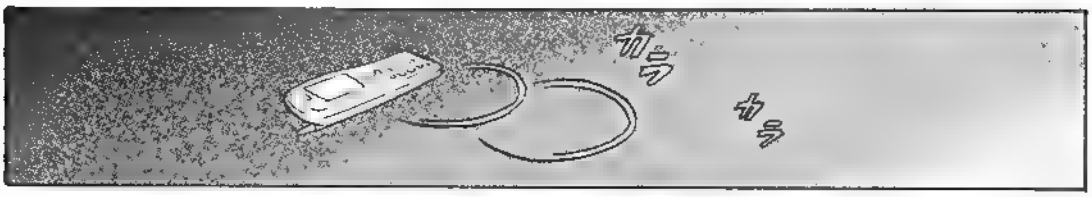




SHORT MAIL#14.5···END


haaa
haaa
hahh
haaa


ズザァッ
AGH!
ガッ
hahh
haaa
haaa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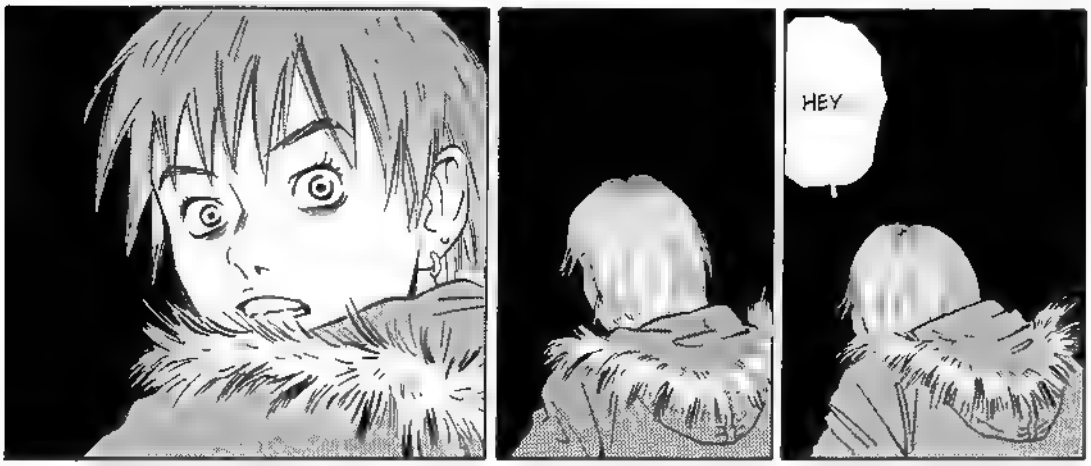
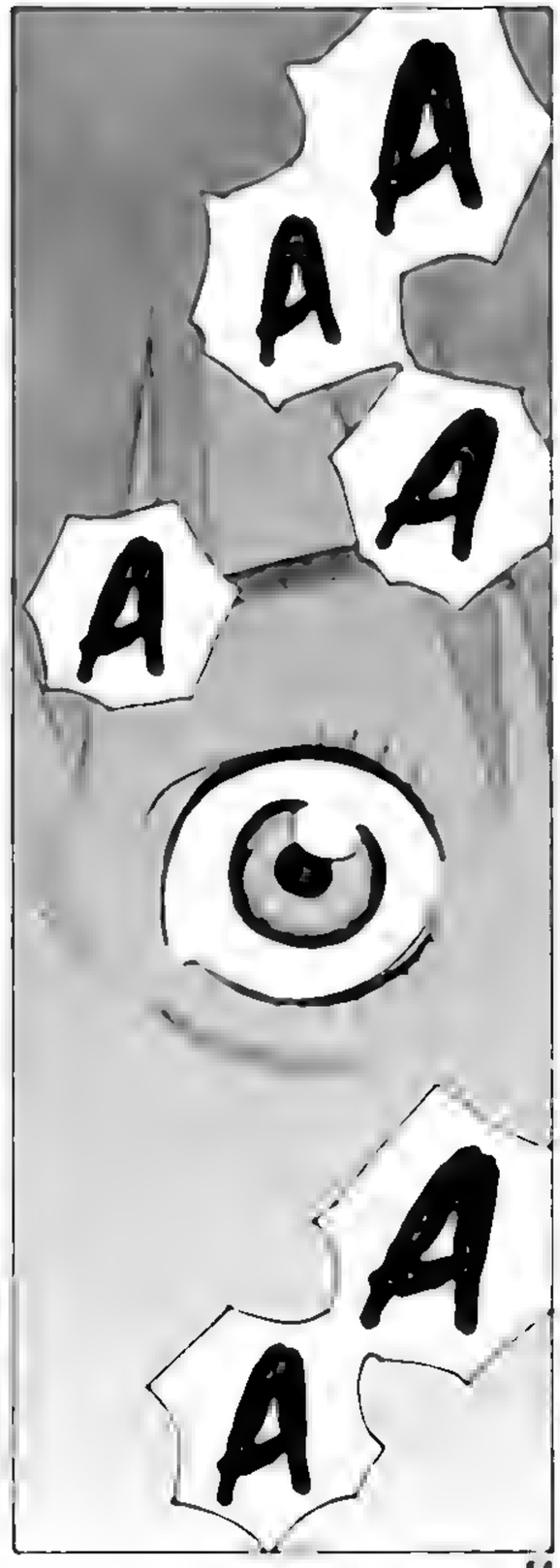
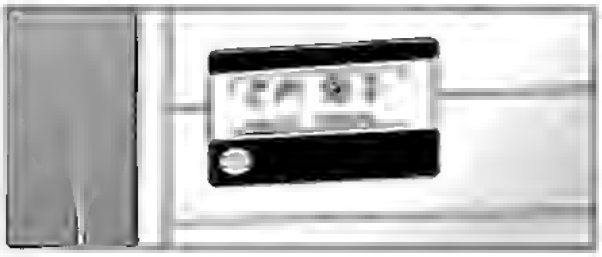
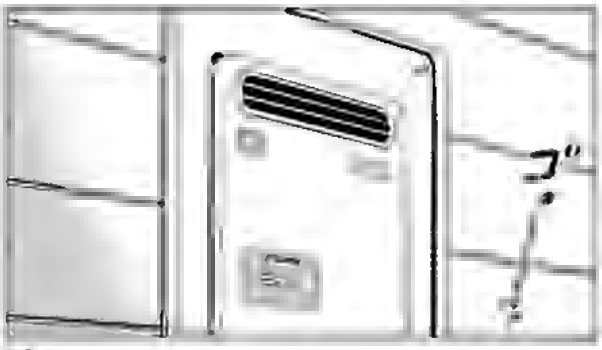

HEY

MAIL #15
UN-NOTIFYNG



ARE YOU THE KIND WHO GIVES YOUR CELL PHONE NUMBER AND E-MAIL ADDRESS TO PEOPLE YOU'VE JUST MET?
AND THE TYPE WHO THINKS IT'S OKAY TO ERASE *THEIR* INFO IF YOU NEVER GET IN TOUCH?
カチャ
HELLO EVERYONE. YOU KNOW MY NAME.
THIS TIME, I'M HERE TO GIVE YOU A BIT OF ADVICE ABOUT THE CELL PHONES WE ALL CARRY.
ピッ
WELL THEN, IF POSSIBLE, PLEASE USE THE HIDE NUMBER FEATURE WHENEVER CALLING SOME-ONE UNFAMILIAR.
ピッ
09231
AND YOU ALSO NEVER KNOW IF THAT PERSON IS ALIVE.
ツーツー
ツーツー
ツーツー
AFTER ALL, YOU NEVER KNOW IF THAT PERSON'S *GOING TO BE A* STALKER, OR SOMEONE WHO'S GOING TO SELL YOUR INFORMATION...
...YEAH.





WHAT?! HE DIDN'T!
WELL, HE SENT SOME MAIL THEN...
NO WAY! SO, AFTER THAT THE TWO OF YOU JUST EXCHANGED E-MAIL ADDRESSES?
AH HA HA! OKAY, OKAY, I GOT IT!
AAH, I GUESS HE WAS JUST BEING POLITE.
OKAY THEN, I'LL SEE YOU SOON. GOOD NIGHT.
ピッ

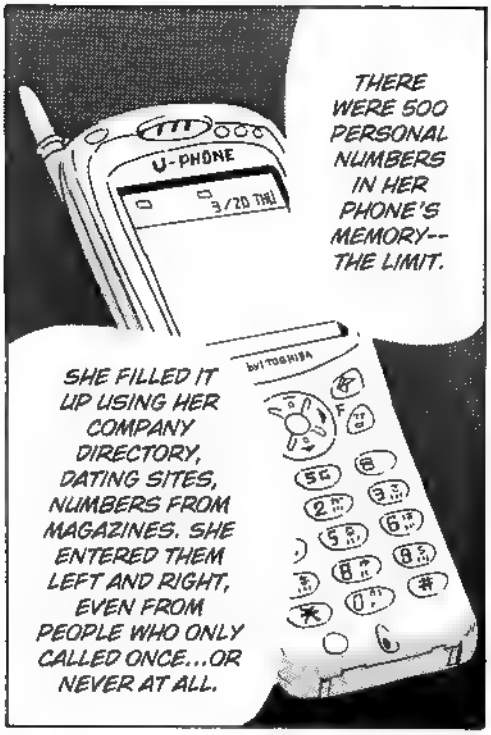
パシャ
パシャ
ザーアアア
コトン
草語
MMM... THERE'S NO SUBJECT... JUST AN ATTACHMENT?
ピポピポピポピポ
ピポピポピポピポ
ピッ
信 BOX
(no subject)
瀬賀愛
AI SEGA?! WHO'S THAT...?
AH, COME ON. MORE MAIL?
ピポピポピポピポ

GizOne
Touruko, I'm coming over.
Back
Save
I'm coming over
WHO...IS THAT...?

UGH, WITH THAT WEIRD ANGLE, I CAN'T TELL WHO IT IS.
MAYBE THEY GOT THE ADDRESS WRONG...NO, IT HAD MY NAME IN IT...
MMM, I CAN'T REMEMBER ...
"SORRY, BUT COULD YOU GIVE ME A CALL?"
JUST REPLY TO SENDER, I GUESS.
BUT WHAT AM I GONNA DO? SHE SAID SHE'S COMING OVER.
...HUH... ALREADY?
THAT'S ALL I'M GONNA WRITE...

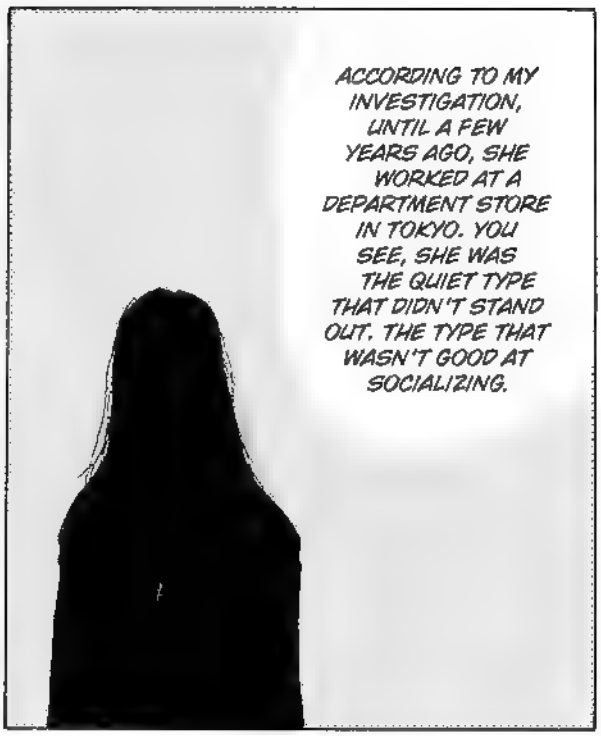
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
WAIT A SEC...IT BOUNCED?
WHAT?!
Due to an error in the following address, your message was unable to be sent. Please verify the address and try sending again.
Back
Next Mail
Submenu
WAS THE ADDRESS PHONY?
U-UM... HELLO ...?
Number Hidde
...NUMBER HIDDEN...? WHO IS IT...?
NOW SOMEONE'S CALLING...
WHOA!

IS THIS MS. TOURUKO IKEUCHI? MY NAME'S AKIBA. I'M A DETECTIVE.
UM...A DETECTIVE ...?!
THAT'S RIGHT...I'M SORRY TO CALL SO LATE, BUT I'M CURRENTLY INVESTIGATING SOME PRANK CALLS. I JUST HAVE A FEW THINGS I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU.
MS. IKEUCHI, DID YOU RECENTLY RECEIVE MAIL FROM AN AI SEGA?
UM...YEAH. I JUST RECEIVED IT. WHY?
JUST AS I THOUGHT.
WELL, IT'S BECAUSE OF WHO SENT THE MAIL, AI SEGA.
SHE'S BEEN DEAD FOR SOME TIME.
WELL THEN, COULD YOU TELL ME WHERE YOU'RE AT NOW AND YOUR HOME PHONE NUMBER...?
I'M AT HOME RIGHT NOW. WHY? I DON'T SEE WHAT YOU'RE GETTING AT...



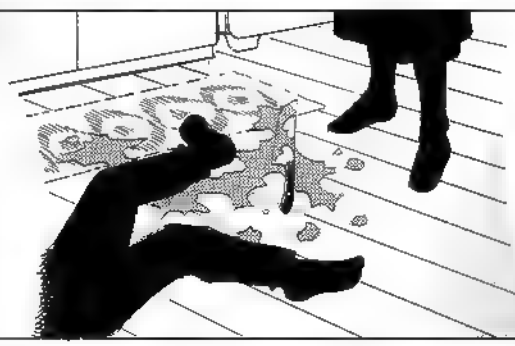
THERE WERE 500 PERSONAL NUMBERS IN HER PHONE'S MEMORY--THE LIMIT.

SHE FILLED IT UP USING HER COMPANY DIRECTORY, DATING SITES, NUMBERS FROM MAGAZINES. SHE ENTERED THEM LEFT AND RIGHT, EVEN FROM PEOPLE WHO ONLY CALLED ONCE...OR NEVER AT ALL.

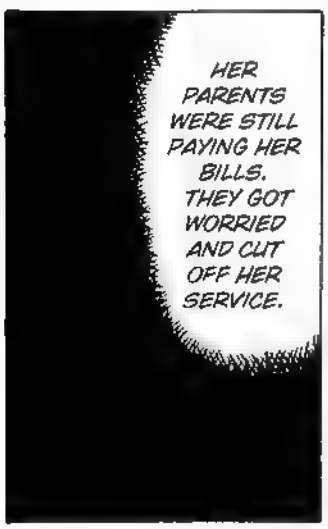


ACCORDING TO MY INVESTIGATION, UNTIL A FEW YEARS AGO, SHE WORKED AT A DEPARTMENT STORE IN TOKYO. YOU SEE, SHE WAS THE QUIET TYPE THAT DIDN'T STAND OUT. THE TYPE THAT WASN'T GOOD AT SOCIALIZING.

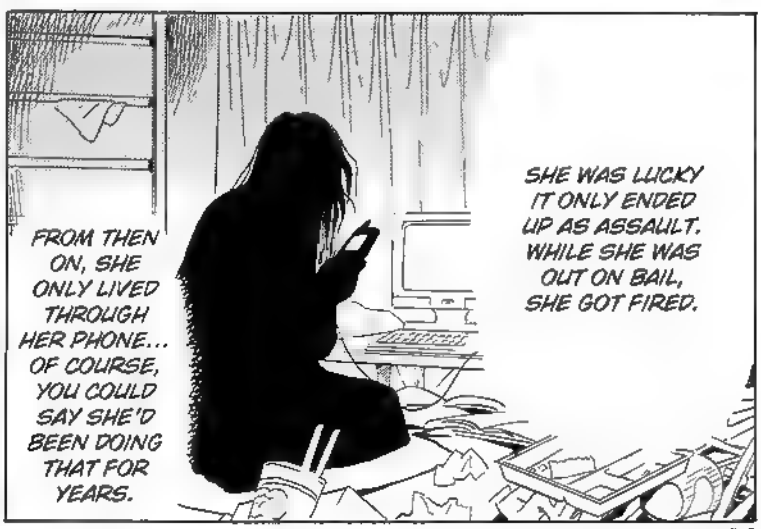
ONE DAY SHE BROKE INTO THE HOME OF ONE OF THESE COMPLETE STRANGERS SCREAMING, "HOW COME YOU NEVER CALL?" WITH HER PHONE IN ONE HAND, AND A KNIFE IN THE OTHER.



SHE CAME TO THINK OF THEM ALL AS CLOSE FRIENDS. FRIENDS WHO REALLY OWED HER.



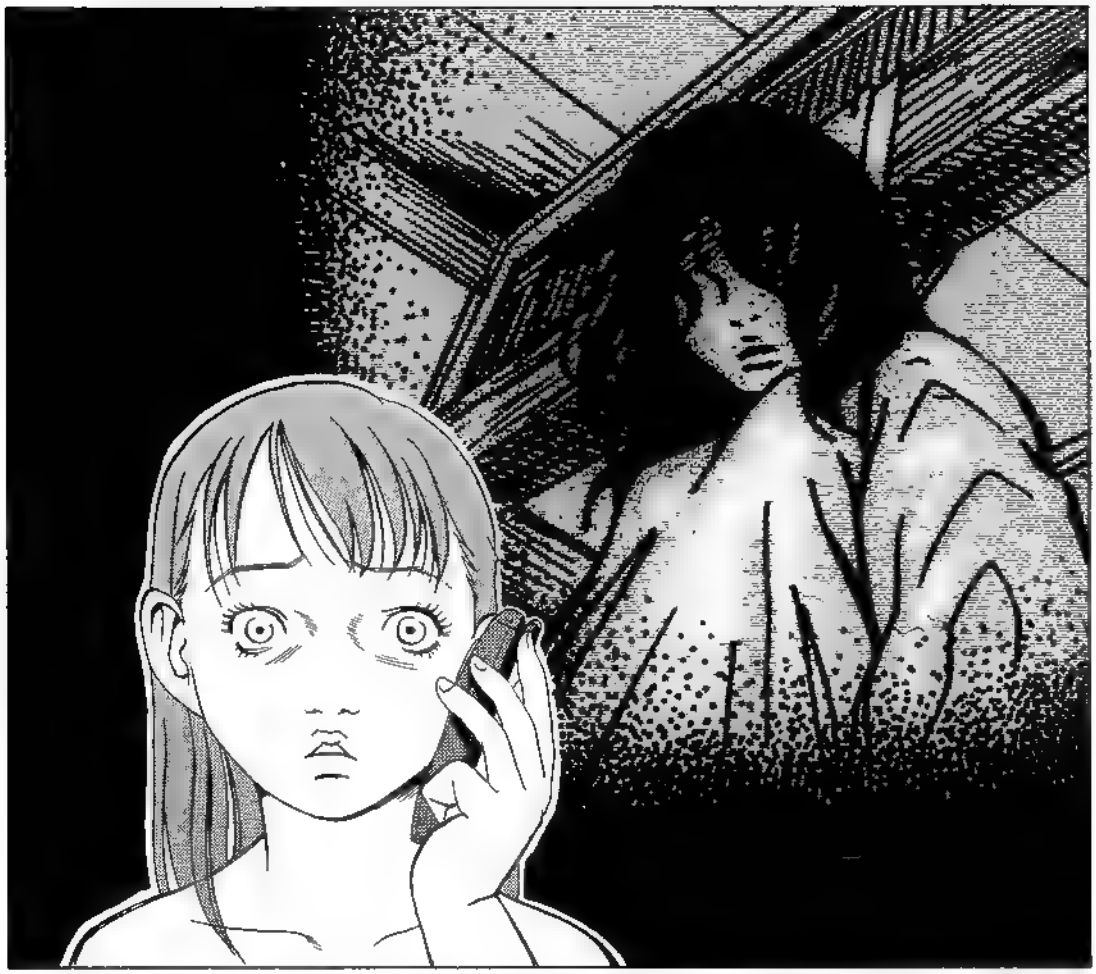
HER PARENTS WERE STILL PAYING HER BILLS. THEY GOT WORRIED AND CUT OFF HER SERVICE.



FROM THEN ON, SHE ONLY LIVED THROUGH HER PHONE... OF COURSE, YOU COULD SAY SHE'D BEEN DOING THAT FOR YEARS.

SHE WAS LUCKY IT ONLY ENDED UP AS ASSAULT. WHILE SHE WAS OUT ON BAIL, SHE GOT FIRED.

IT WAS THE WRONG MOVE TO MAKE, THOUGH WELL INTENTIONED.
A CADAVER'S GRIP CAN BE QUITE STRONG.
THE PICTURE BUTTON HAD BEEN PRESSED... THE IMAGE OF HER CORPSE THAT SHE HAD SENT AS HER LAST CALL.
THE CELL PHONE WAS FOUND LOCKED IN HER HAND.



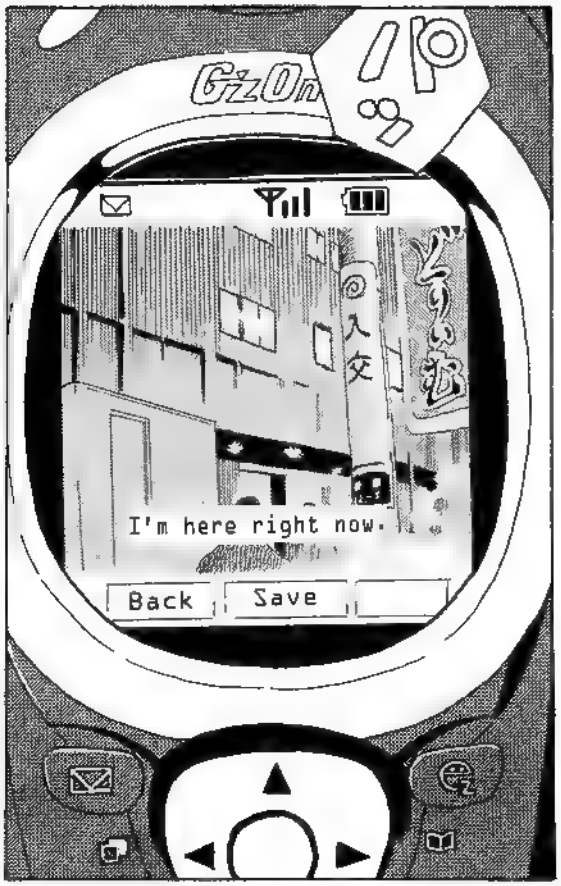
AND NOW, THIS IS A MATTER OF YOUR LIFE OR DEATH AS WELL.
OF COURSE.

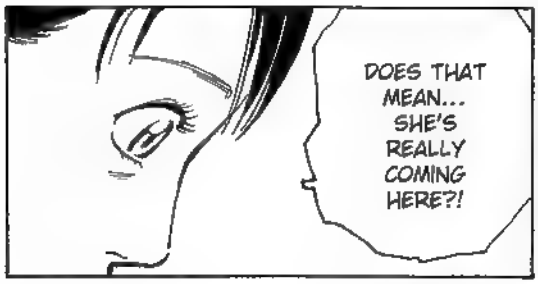
S-SO YOU'RE SAYING... THAT DEAD GIRL SENT ME MAIL?

EVEN AS SHE STRANGLED, SHE CALMLY ENTERED FIFTEEN NUMBERS INTO HER CELL PHONE, ONE BY ONE.

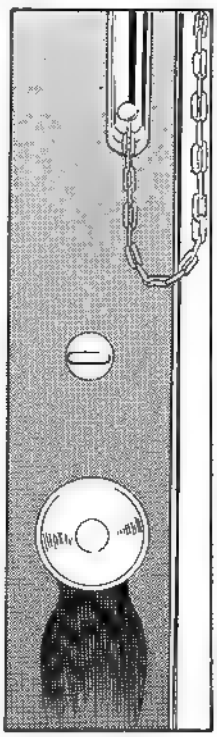
I DON'T KNOW HER! SHE'S NOT MY FRIEND--
B-BUT...I DON'T EVEN KNOW THIS PERSON!
YOU ARE THE 15TH AND LAST, MS. IKEUCHI.
THE FIRST FOURTEEN ALL RECEIVED THEIR MESSAGES. MANY OF THEM HAVE HAD BAD ACCIDENTS SINCE THEN.
HEY...WAIT! WHY ARE YOU HANGING UP ON ME?!!
ツ ツ ツ ツ
MS. IKEUCHI ...
ブツ
受信BOX
001
件 (no subject)
瀬賀愛
002
ピッ
ピポパ ピポポッ
ピポパ ピポポッ
ピポパ ピポポッ
IT'S... FROM HER.
THERE'S MAIL...

THIS IS...
IT'S...IT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE TRAIN STATION.
入交
とりい丸

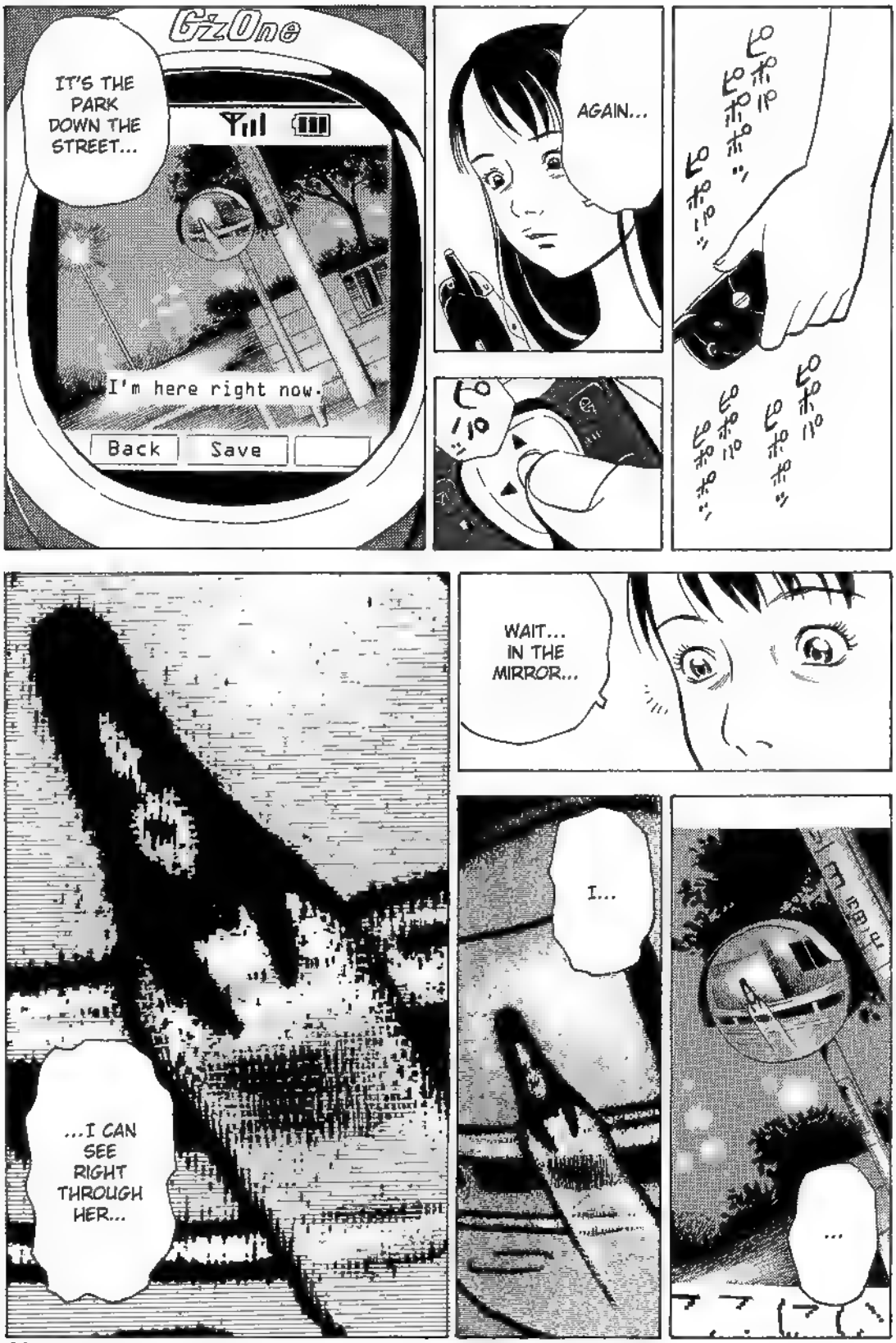

ピッ
GizOn
I'm here right now.
Back
Save
入交
とりい丸


DOES THAT MEAN... SHE'S REALLY COMING HERE?!

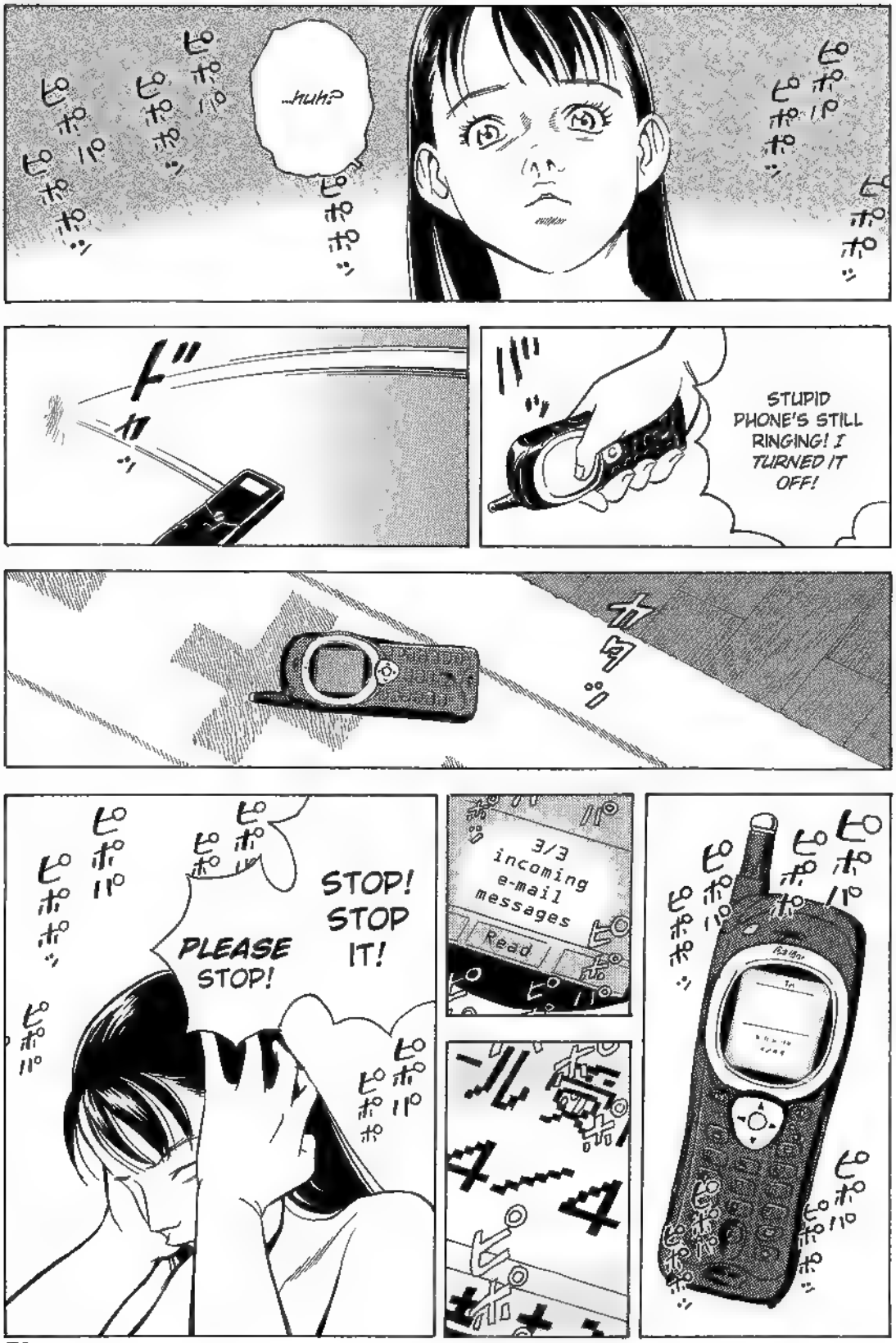
NO! WHAT AM I SAYING? IT'S A PRANK!! THERE'S NO WAY A DEAD PERSON CAN SEND MAIL!

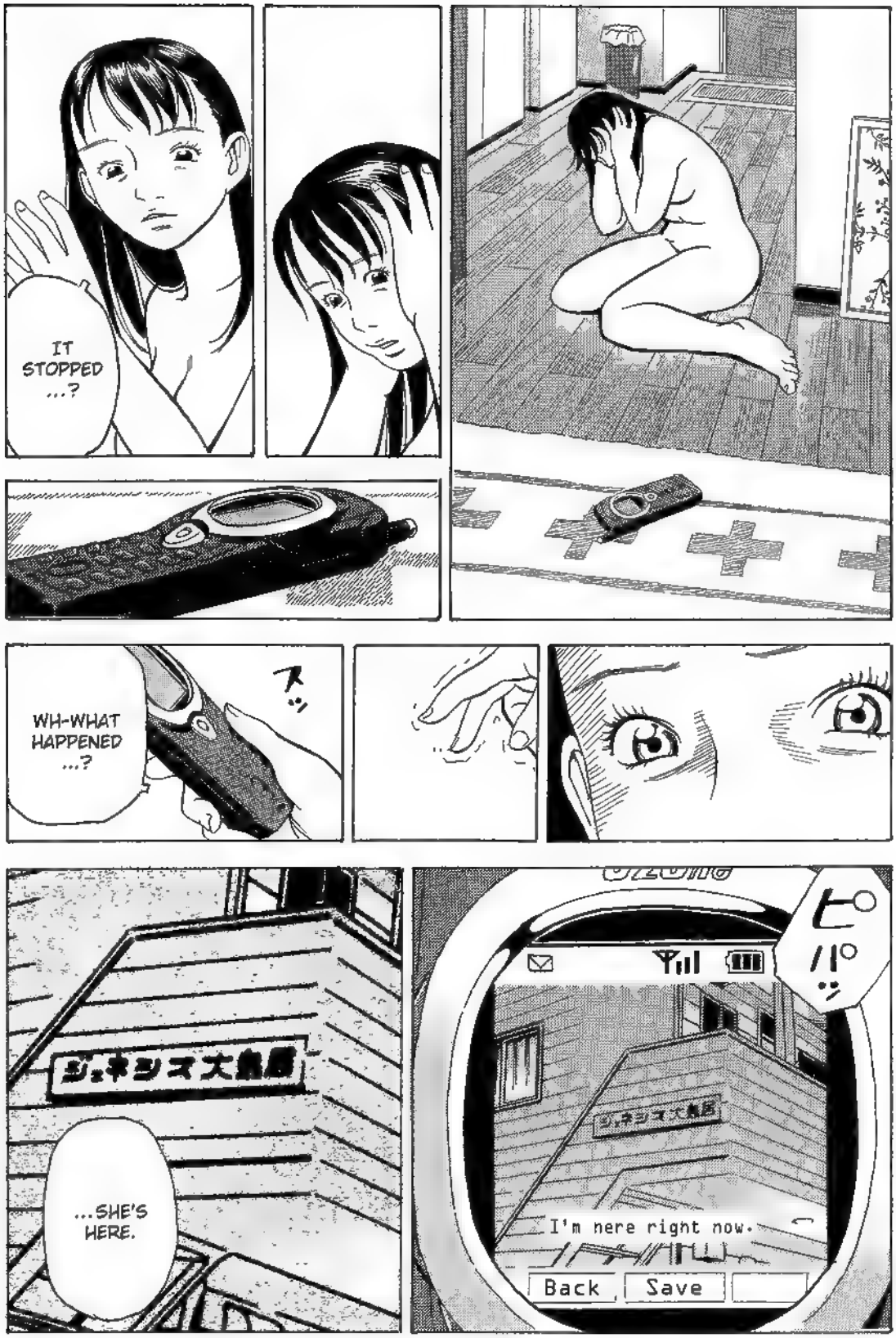


カチャ
I'M SURE I LOCKED THE DOOR...


GzOne
IT'S THE PARK DOWN THE STREET...
I'm here right now.
Back
Save
AGAIN...
ピポ ピポ ピポ ピポ
ピポ ピポ ピポ ピポ
WAIT... IN THE MIRROR...
I...
...I CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH HER...
...

HOW DO I... I SHOULD... REJECT INCOMING CALLS...
WH-WHAT AM I GOING TO DO...?!
NO...WAIT!
NO!
THIS IS CRAZY ...
...I JUST TURNED IT OFF...


...huh?
STUPID PHONE'S STILL RINGING! I TURNED IT OFF!
PLEASE STOP!
STOP! STOP IT!
3/3 incoming e-mail messages
Read

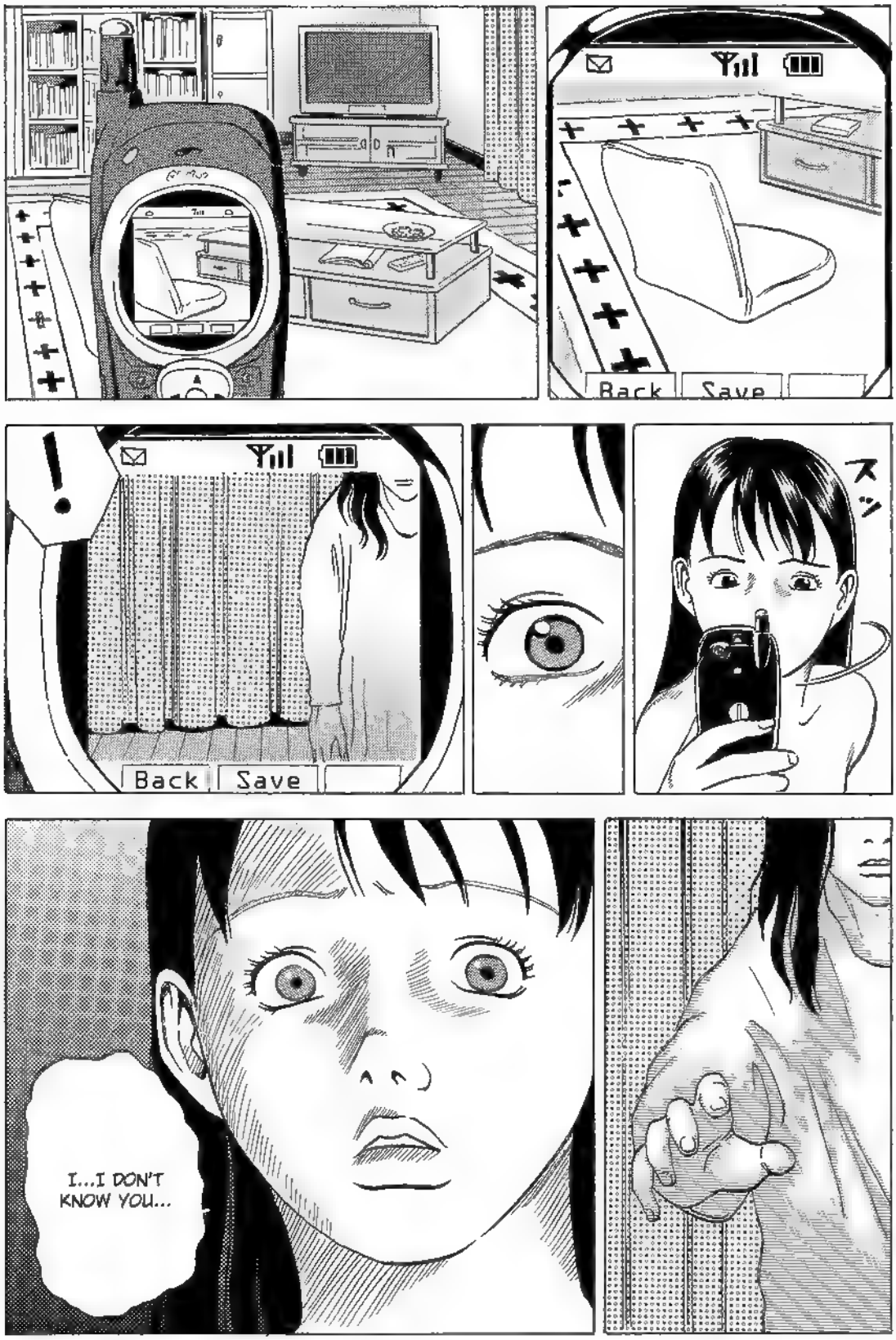

IT STOPPED ...?
WH-WHAT HAPPENED ...?
スッ
ピロリン
I'm here right now.
Back
Save
...SHE'S HERE.

I'm here right now.
Back
Save
WHAT... WHAT'S THE NEXT MESSAGE ...
ピッ
ピッ
THE STAIRS ...
MY D-DOOR...
I'm here right now.
Back
Save
ピッ
BOX
no subject
瀬賀愛
002
ONE MORE ...
ゴクッ

GzOne
I'm here.
Back
Save
I'm here

WAIT... NOBODY'S HERE.
SO...HOW... HOW DID THEY TAKE THIS PICTURE ...?!
ブオオオオ
ポタン
ポタン

...?
Dream Cast
IT...IT CAN'T BE...
Photo Mode
Back
Save


Back
Save
!
Back
Save
スッ
I...I DON'T KNOW YOU...

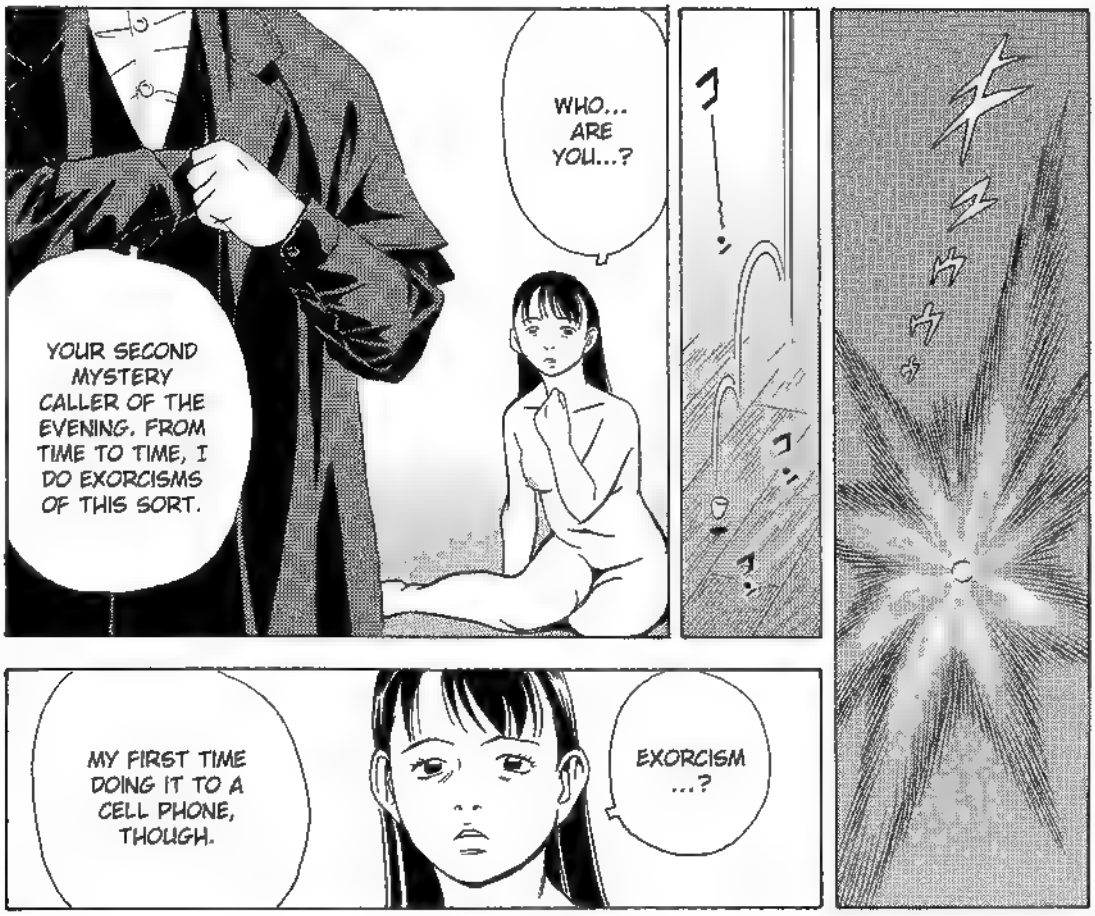
Back
Save
Clone

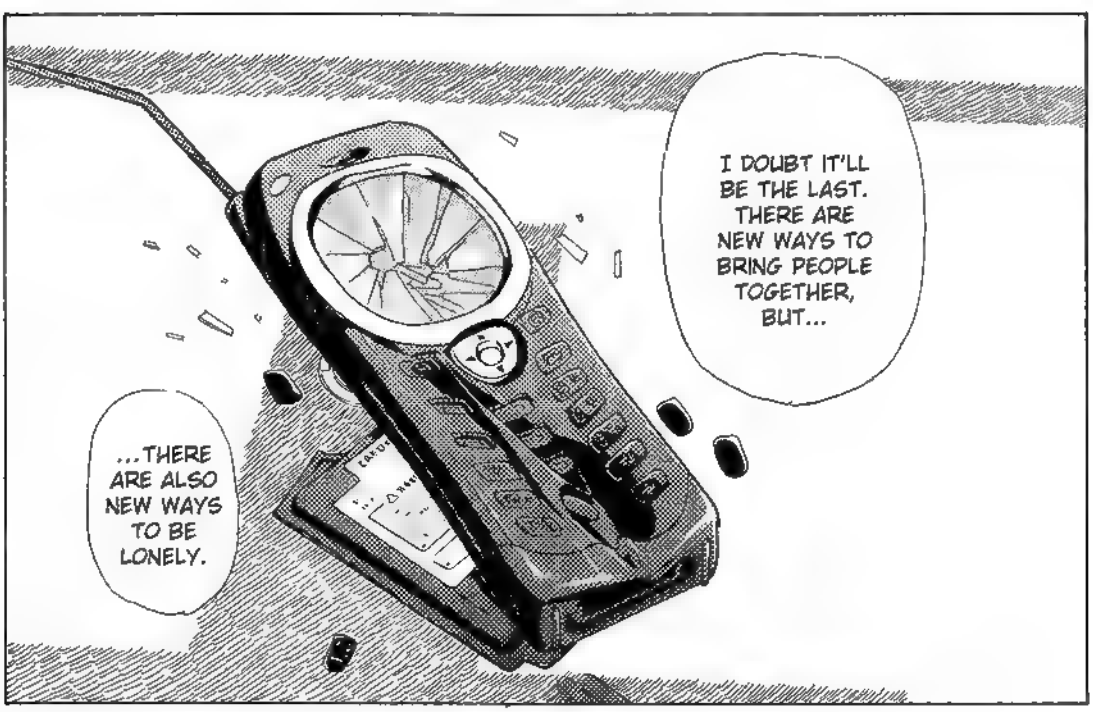
MS. IKEUCHI?
MS. IKEUCHI, ARE YOU THERE?
BUT THERE'S NO GHOST IN THIS ROOM...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
OHH...

AKIBA, THE PHONE IS DEAD.
GIVE ME THAT!!
FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, THE GHOSTS OF SUICIDES HAVE BECOME TIED TO THIS WORLD... HAUNTING THE PLACES WHERE THEY DIED.
BUT NOW...
...THEY HAVE A NEW WAY TO WANDER.

AND SHE STILL HAS NO PLACE TO GO.
スゥゥゥ。
...
SO STOP ROAMING.

...TO END.
DEAD SOUL BORNE BY SIGNAL WITH MY GUN ! ADMONISH YOU ! READ YOU AND ! RECEIVE YOU.
FROM CALL...TO TALK..
ドオ
うわああ


WHO... ARE YOU...?
YOUR SECOND MYSTERY CALLER OF THE EVENING. FROM TIME TO TIME, I DO EXORCISMS OF THIS SORT.
MY FIRST TIME DOING IT TO A CELL PHONE, THOUGH.
EXORCISM ...?

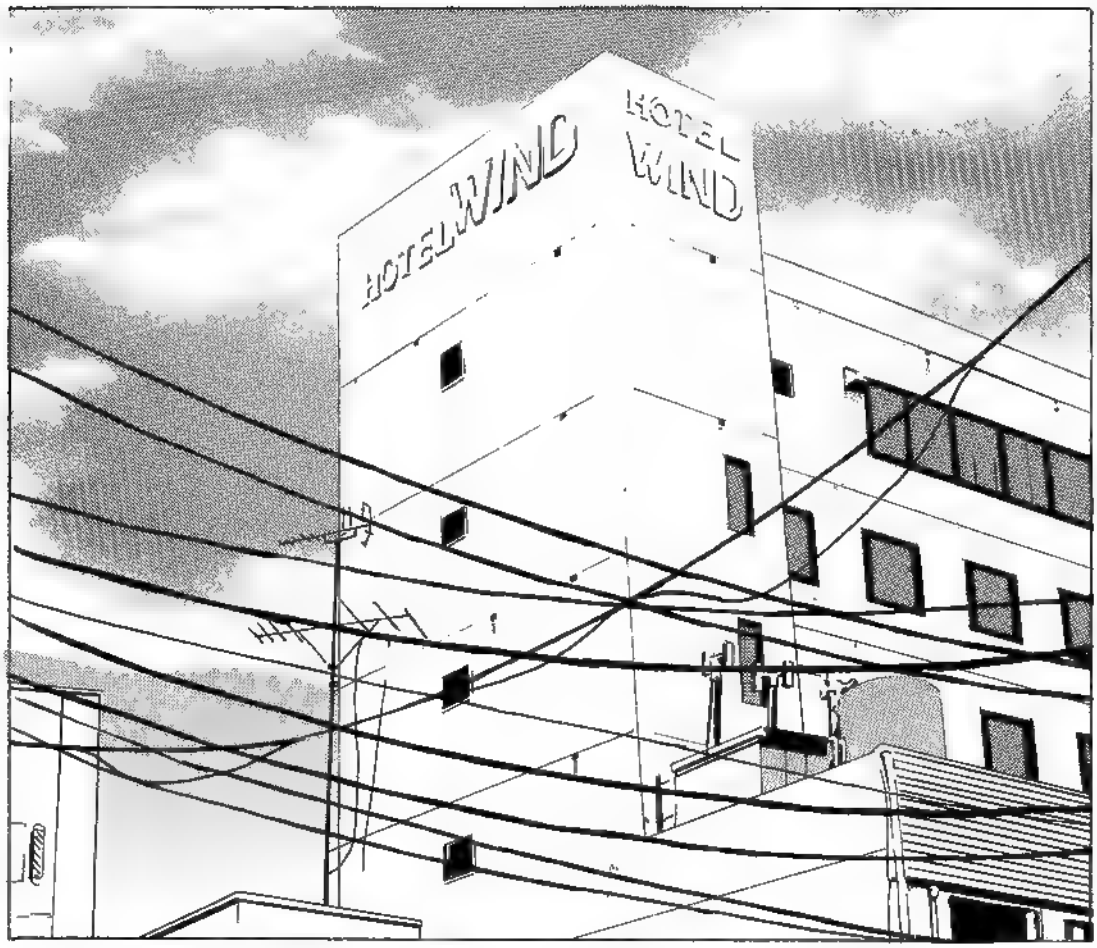

I DOUBT IT'LL BE THE LAST. THERE ARE NEW WAYS TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER, BUT...
...THERE ARE ALSO NEW WAYS TO BE LONELY.

MAIL#15···END

405

MAIL#16
MATERNAL INSTINCT
MATERNAL INSTINCT

A-TO THE-K TO THE I-B-A.
HAVE ANY OF YOU EVER BEEN TO SEE THE SITE OF A SCARY STORY YOU HEARD ABOUT...JUST OUT OF CURIOSITY? WELL, I'M NOT MORBID LIKE YOU.
MY PROFESSION BEING WHAT IT IS, IT'S SIMPLY MY JOB TO KNOW SUCH PLACES. BUT I'VE GOT TO KEEP SOME TRADE SECRETS.
FOR EXAMPLE, IF I WERE TO SAY NO MORE THAN THIS...DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE GHOST OF A CERTAIN WRITER WHO APPEARS AT K BOOK STORE IN T WARD, TOKYO?
AH-HA! NOW ALL OF A SUDDEN YOU'RE SAYING, gasp! IS HE TALKING ABOUT MY COMPANY?
THAT'S RIGHT...THOSE IN THE KNOW CAN RECOGNIZE A NOTORIOUS LOCALE BY ITS INITIALS.
ESPECIALLY IF THEY WERE THERE WHEN THE EVIL OCCURRED.

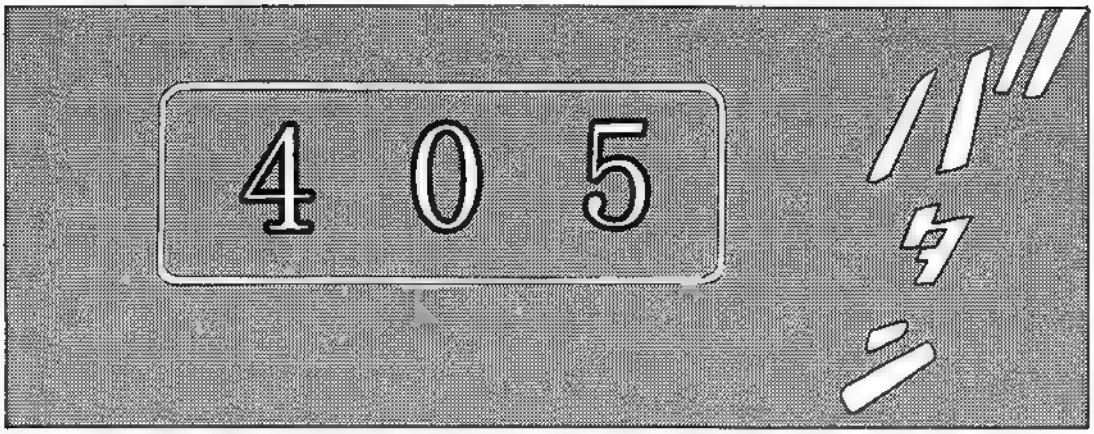

HOTEL WIND
HOTEL WIND

GOOD AFTER-NOON.

I'LL HAVE ONE OF OUR PORTERS SHOW YOU TO YOUR ROOM IN JUST A MOMENT.
MS. WATANABE? WE HAVE YOUR RESERVATION.
OH...YES, THANK YOU.
チャラ
Wホテル ウインド
Wホテル ウインド
...MAMA ...
IT'S RIGHT HERE...
ガシャン

HERE WE GO, BABY.
OKAY, OKAY... SORRY, AKKO-CHAN.
MAMA...

WELL, THEN... ENJOY YOUR STAY.
IT'S FINE.
IS THE ROOM ALL RIGHT, MA'AM ...?

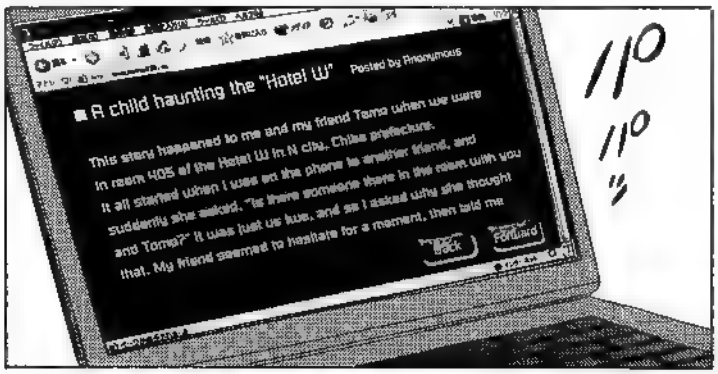

405
バタン

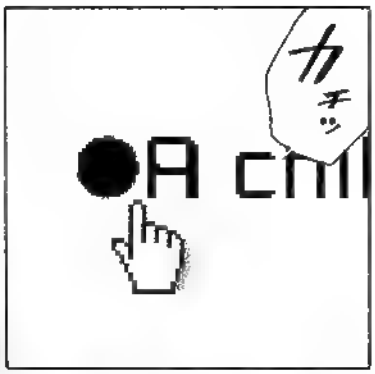
...IT'S NOT THE SORT OF THING YOU CAN ENJOY.
ON THIS SAME NIGHT, NOT TOO MANY YEARS AGO...
NOT IF IT'S TRUE.
...A BABY DIED HERE...
...IN ROOM 405.

● Car accident girl appears on vid

● A child haunting the "Hotel W"

● Spooky tanuki lurks in a tabl


■A child haunting the "Hotel W" Posted by Anonymous
This story happened to me and my friend Tomo when we were in room 405 of the Hotel W in N city, Chiba prefecture.
It all started when I was on the phone to another friend, and suddenly she asked, "Is there someone there in the room with you and Tomo?" It was just us two, and so I asked why she thought that. My friend seemed to hesitate for a moment, then told me
Back
Forward
110
110



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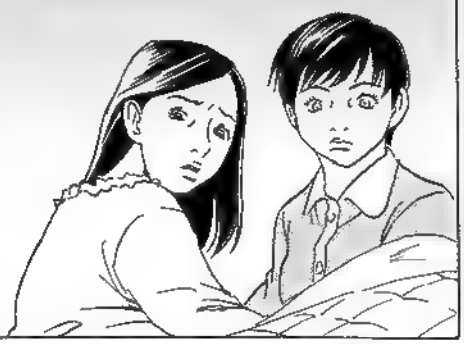
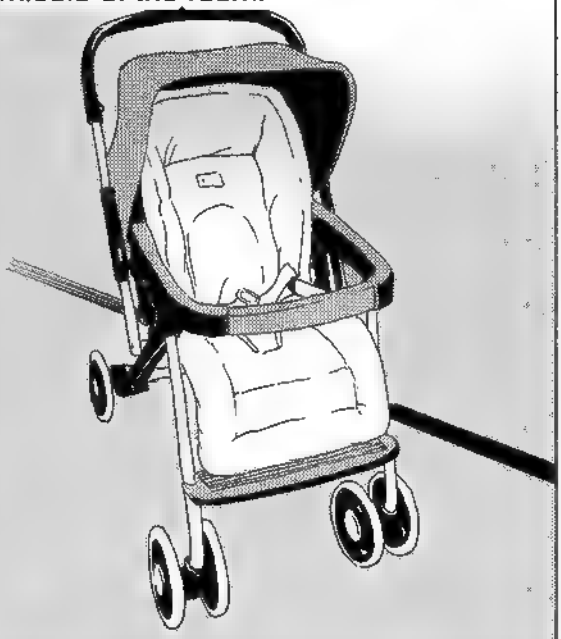
"Just then, I heard a child's voice in the background say, 'mama.'"

"Just then, I heard a child's voice in the background say, 'mama.'" Of course there wasn't anyone there, so I thought she was hearing things...but later on, in the middle of the night, Tomo and I woke up to a strange noise. It was like the creaking of small wheels, moving around and around the room. I was startled and got up from the bed, turning on the lights to look and there

We were frightened and asked the front desk to put us in another room for the night.

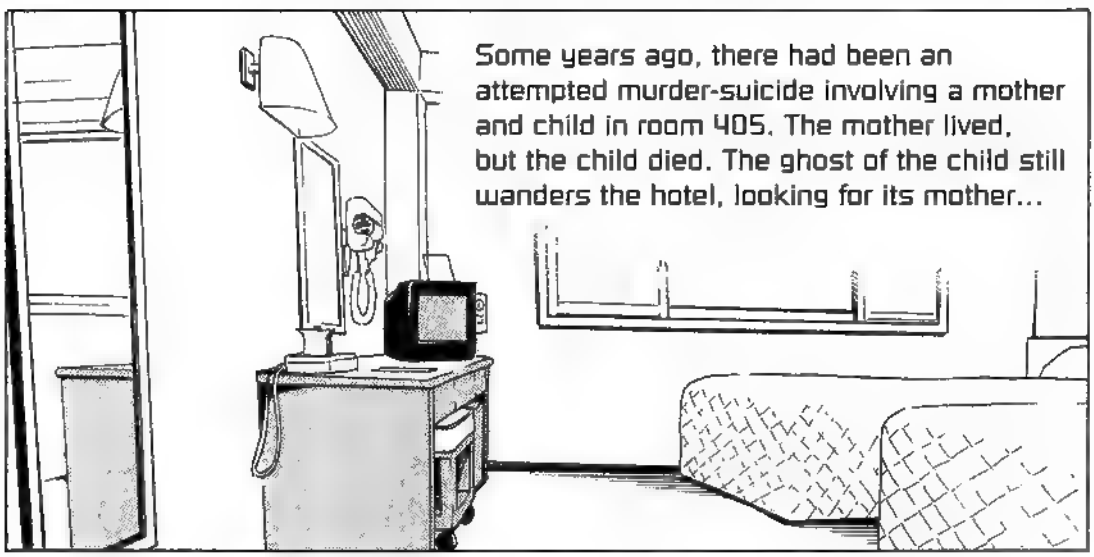


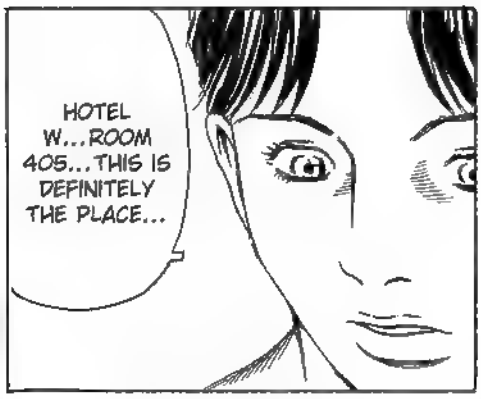
all of a sudden, was a baby carriage with no one in it, sitting in the middle of the room.

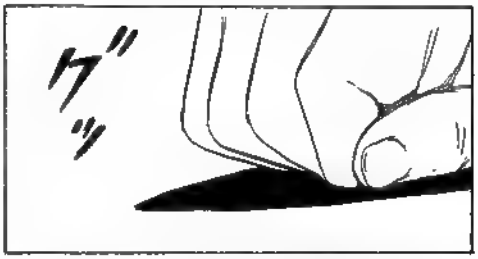


When we went back to the room early the next morning, the baby carriage wasn't there.

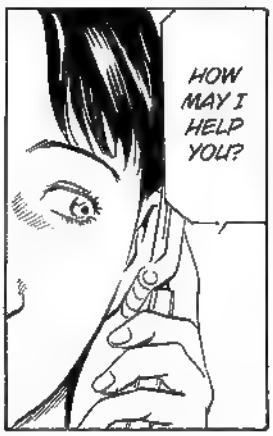
We talked about all this with the manager. He refunded our money, but was reluctant to discuss the matter...

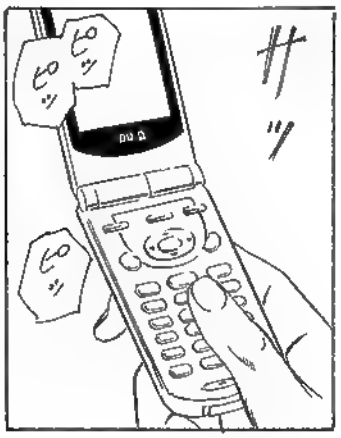

Some years ago, there had been an attempted murder-suicide involving a mother and child in room 405. The mother lived, but the child died. The ghost of the child still wanders the hotel, looking for its mother...





"Just then, I heard a child's voice in the background say, 'mama.'"





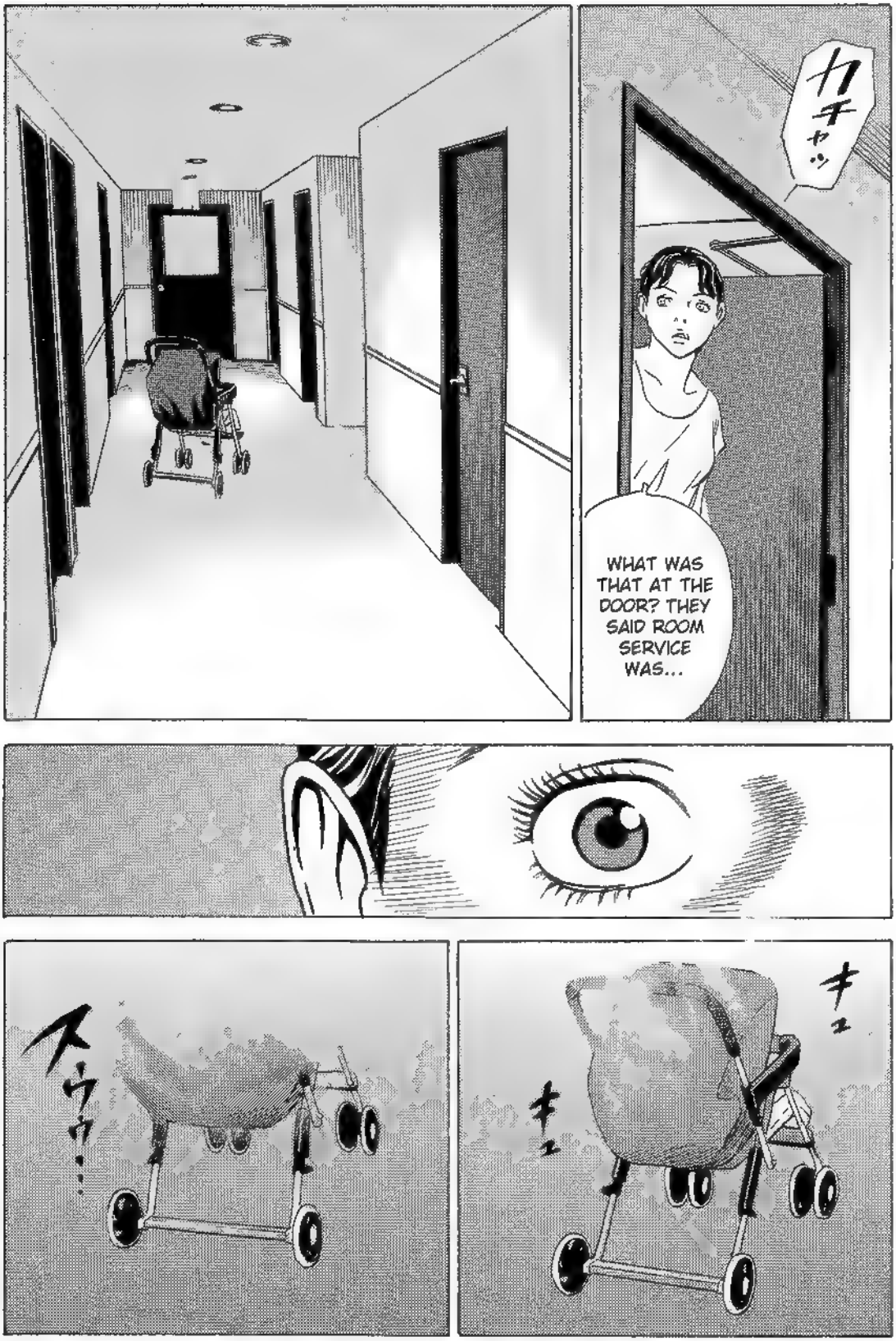
MS. WATANABE? YOU HAVE A CALL ON THE OUTSIDE LINE. PLEASE PUSH THE BUTTON TO RECEIVE IT.
OH... OKAY.
カチャ
6
Front Desk
外線発信
Local & Long Distance Call
ピッ
トゥ
キーン

NOTHING'S HAPPENING...
カラン
...IS HE HERE...?
YOUR MAMA'S HERE, SO WHY AREN'T YOU?! AREN'T YOU LOOKING FOR ME, TA-CHAN?!!

IT'S FUNNY, ISN'T IT? I THOUGHT I TOOK MY OWN LIFE...BUT THEN I JUST WOKE UP AGAIN.
AND I WAS IN THE HOSPITAL... AND I WAS A MURDERER.
MAMA HASN'T FORGOTTEN ABOUT YOU, TA-CHAN...
...HOW COULD I FORGET? I THOUGHT OF YOU THE WHOLE TIME I WAS IN PRISON...
MAMA KILLED YOU.
HOTEL WIND
HOTEL WIND
...H-HELLO?

...N-NO... THANK YOU...
...MA'AM...?
HELLO, THIS IS THE FRONT DESK. ROOM SERVICE WILL BE CLOSING IN 30 MINUTES. WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLACE AN ORDER?
sigh
WELL, IT'S GETTING TO BE THAT TIME.
カチッ
its mother...
Forward
OH... THERE'S MORE TO THE STORY...
I LEFT MY COMPUTER ON.

From what I heard, the next morning after we stayed there, a Shinto priest was summoned to the hotel and performed a purification ritual.


カチャッ
WHAT WAS THAT AT THE DOOR? THEY SAID ROOM SERVICE WAS...
スゥゥ…
キュ
キュ

MAMA
IT'S YOU, ISN'T IT, TA-CHAN?! PLEASE... PLEASE COME BACK...
...TA-CHAN!
DONT MAMA
...BEHIND THE PICTURE... MAMA
...TA-CHAN?! IS THAT YOU?
ケータイ
BEHIND THE PICTURE ...?
ON THE WALL...?

ガタ
カタン
WHAT IS...
!
THE PRIEST HID THIS...A TALISMAN.
厄祓
キュ
キュッ
キュッ
ビリッ
クシャ
クシャ
I GOT IT...I GOT IT, TA-CHAN.
TA-CHAN ...?

キィィッ
キュキュ
キュ
キィ

MAMA
MAMA
GO
NIGHT
NIGHT
TOO

TA-CHAN... MAMA'S SORRY.
YOU...
...YOU'RE HERE...
...MAMA ...
MAMA WANTED TO SEE YOU AGAIN...
BUT...BUT I SHOULD NEVER... HAVE MADE YOU GO TOO...
...I WAS SO SAD BACK THEN...SO SAD...I WANTED TO DIE...
...MAMA WASN'T FAIR...

MAMA
GO...
...
TOO.
GO.
GO.
NIGHT-
NIGHT...
MAMA.

DO YOU WANT...
...TO TOUCH ME...?
TA-CHAN ...?!
ヒュン
ゴゴゴ
ゴゴゴ

TA...
TA-CHAN...
I...I'M...
...I'M
S-SORRY
...
...?
IT'S A
PITY...BUT THE
ONLY THING
THAT CHILD
WANTS IS
YOUR DEATH.
THAT'S
NOT WHAT
I WANT,
THOUGH.

WITH MY GUN I ADMONISH YOU. I RAISE AND I REVEAL YOU.
カチ
スッ
DEAD SOUL, CRAWLING THROUGH SHADOW
FROM WOMB TO BIRTH...
...TO DEATH.

ヒィ
ヒィ
ヒィ

WAAAAA
AAA
AAA
MA
MA
KOFF

Y-YOU... WHAT HAPPENED... WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON?
ポトッ
I READ THE SAME WEB PAGE YOU DID.
トッ
I WAITED FOR THE CHILD'S GHOST...JUST LIKE YOU.

SO IS THAT CHILD'S GHOST REALLY FREE NOW... AKIBA-SAN?
YES. HIS SOUL WILL BE CLEANSED, AND RETURNED AGAIN TO THE CYCLE OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS.
SOMEONE HAD TO COME AND ALLOW THE GHOST TO APPEAR AGAIN...THE RIGHT PERSON.
PURIFICATION RITES ARE EXACTLY WHAT THEY SOUND LIKE--SIMPLY AN ACT THAT DRIVES GHOSTS AWAY. THEY'RE NOT AN EXORCISM.
THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT CHILD'S UNAPPEASED SOUL WAS TIED TO THAT PLACE. BUT BECAUSE THE HOTEL HAD PURIFICATION RITES PERFORMED, IT WAS CONFINED TO WANDER THE HALLWAYS AROUND...LIKE A TRAVELER LOCKED OUT OF HIS OWN ROOM.

AND CATCH SOME RANDOM MORBID PERSON CRUISING THE WEB, WHO HAPPENED TO COME ACROSS THAT PAGE?
WELL, I JUST ASKED TO BE CONTACTED IF THERE WAS A WOMAN THERE WHO RESERVED ROOM 405.
SO, YOU WAITED THE WHOLE TIME FOR ME TO COME, AKIBA-SAN...?
IT WAS DESIGNED TO MINIMIZE INVESTIGATIONS BY RANDOM MORBID PEOPLE.
OF COURSE NOT.
I KNOW THE WEBMASTER...AND OTHER THINGS THAT START WITH THAT LETTER. SPECIFICALLY, THERE ARE FOUR HOTELS IN THIS CITY THAT BEGIN WITH A "W"--THE WORLD, WAVERLY, WATERMARK, AND WAKATE .
WHAT ...?
HOTEL WIND SPELLS ITSELF IN KATAKANA "U-I-N-D." THAT'S THE CLOSEST YOU CAN COME TO SPELLING OUT THE ENGLISH WORD "WIND" IN JAPANESE. I FIGURED MOST PEOPLE READING THAT PAGE WOULD TAKE "HOTEL W" TO MEAN ONE OF THE OTHER FOUR HOTELS.
WHICH *DOESN'T* BEGIN WITH A "W," BECAUSE THE ONLY *W* SOUNDS IN JAPANESE ARE "WA" AND "WO."
BUT THE HOTEL WIND ISN'T ONE OF THE FOUR. THEY ONLY USE THE ROMAN LETTERS ON THEIR SIGN. EVERYTHING ELSE--THEIR HOMEPAGE, THEIR LISTING IN THE PHONE BOOK, THEIR ADS...USES THE KATAKANA SPELLING.

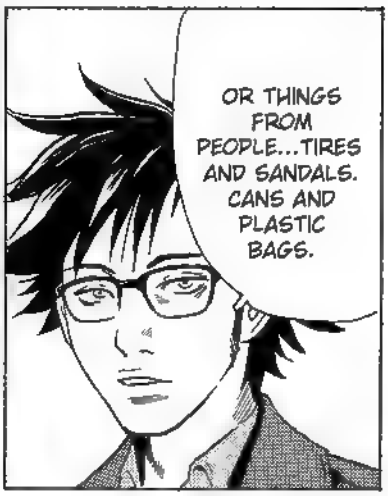
OR, JUST MAYBE...
SOMEONE WHO KNOWS NO FEAR? A MEDIUM PERHAPS?
AND, YOU KNOW, THERE AREN'T TOO MANY PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD WHO WOULD GO UP AGAINST A GHOST ALL BY THEMSELVES.
...THE FLESH AND BLOOD THE GHOST ONCE SHARED.
YES, YOU WERE THERE.
AND NOW, YOU SHOULD GO ON LIVING.

MAIL#16···END

I THOUGHT YOU'D LIKE A CHANGE OF PACE.
HOW ABOUT A NICE VACATION? A TROPICAL ISLAND. WE CAN GO BEACHCOMBING ALONG THE SHORE.

AND OCCASIONALLY... THE ODD MESSAGE FROM THE DEAD.

THINGS OF NATURE...SEA SHELLS AND DRIFTWOOD. COCONUTS AND PALM FRONDS.
ALL KIND OF THINGS WASH UP, YOU KNOW.

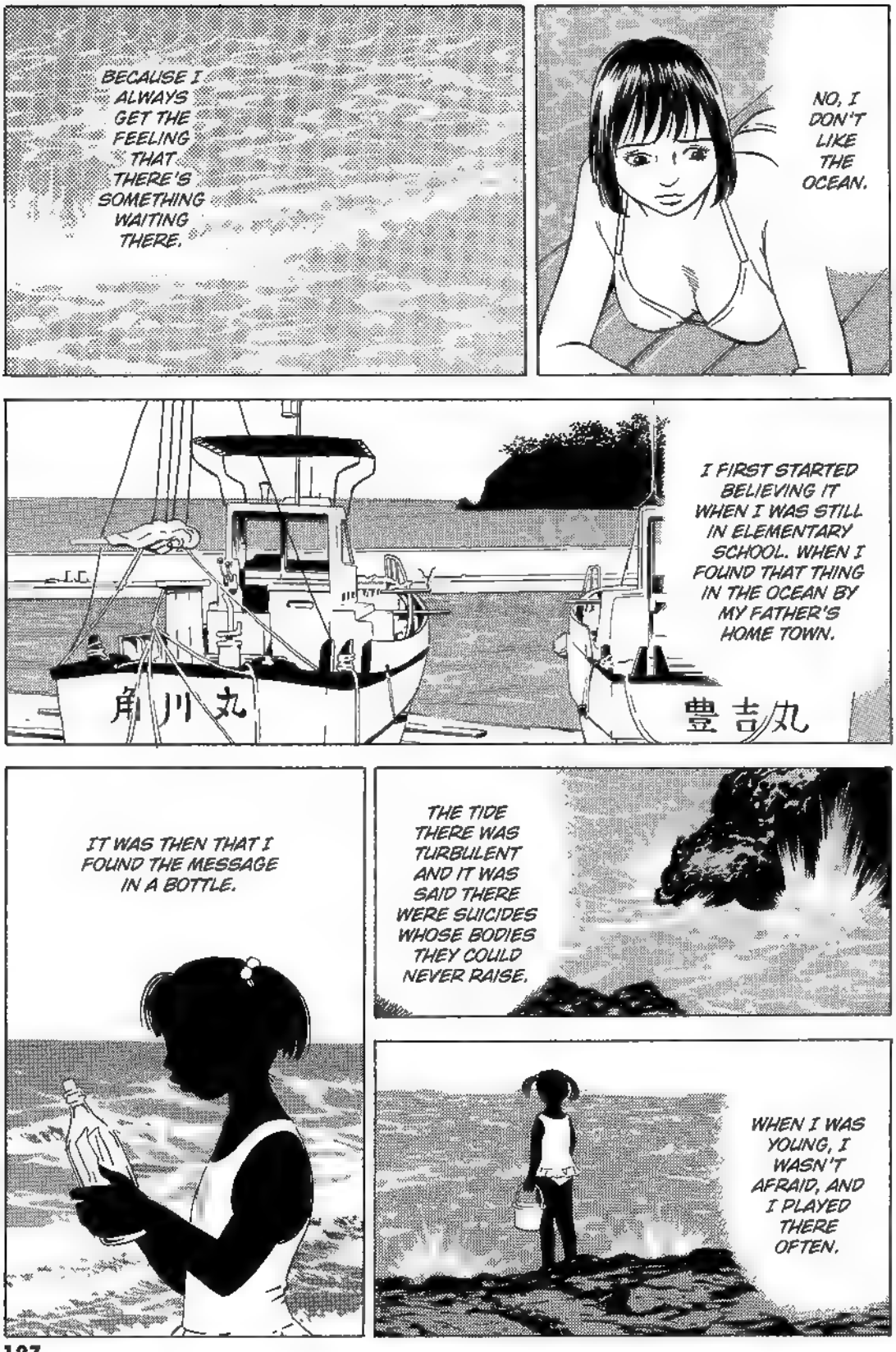

OR THINGS FROM PEOPLE...TIRES AND SANDALS. CANS AND PLASTIC BAGS.

MAIL #17.
SEABED

キィッ
LOOK! IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL! THIS IS GREAT!
LOOKS LIKE USING A RENTAL CAR WAS THE WAY TO GO!

THAT'S WHY TO REALLY ENJOY A TRIP, WE'VE GOTTA GO WHERE THERE'S NO ONE ELSE.
THAT'S WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT IT! JAPANESE TOURISTS AROUND HERE LOOK AND ACT LIKE IDIOTS. YOU KNOW WE GET LAUGHED AT!
C'MON! INTO THE WATER!
CALAVERA BEACH...THIS PLACE ISN'T EVEN IN THE GUIDEBOOK.
TROPICAL PARADISE
SAIPAN
NO ONE...?
IT'S FINE! LIKE I SAID, THERE'S NO ONE AROUND.
...WHAT? WE'RE CHANGING RIGHT HERE...?
WHAT'RE YOU DOING, YUMI? COME ON!
WOW! THE OCEAN'S SO PRETTY!
ARE YOU SURE? I GET THE FEELING SOMEONE'S HERE.

WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO WITH HER? YUMI DOESN'T LIKE THE OCEAN.
AAH, IS SHE BRINGING THAT THING AGAIN?!
WAIT! DON'T GO WITHOUT ME!
IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL DOWN THERE...YOU REALLY SHOULD GIVE SNORKELING A TRY JUST ONCE, Y'KNOW.
WE ONLY TOOK OUR VACATION HERE BECAUSE YOU TWO WANTED TO.
UGH, WHATEVER IF YOU'RE SCARED IN SUNSHINE LIKE THIS, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY
NO THANKS. I'LL STICK AROUND HERE AND KEEP AN EYE ON OUR STUFF WHILE I PADDLE AROUND.


BECAUSE I ALWAYS GET THE FEELING THAT THERE'S SOMETHING WAITING THERE.
NO, I DON'T LIKE THE OCEAN.
I FIRST STARTED BELIEVING IT WHEN I WAS STILL IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. WHEN I FOUND THAT THING IN THE OCEAN BY MY FATHER'S HOME TOWN.
豊吉丸
IT WAS THEN THAT I FOUND THE MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE.
THE TIDE THERE WAS TURBULENT AND IT WAS SAID THERE WERE SUICIDES WHOSE BODIES THEY COULD NEVER RAISE.
WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I WASN'T AFRAID, AND I PLAYED THERE OFTEN.

BUT WHEN I READ THE NOTE, IT WAS MORE LIKE A CURSE THAN A GIFT.
IT SEEMED AS IF THAT OLD BOTTLE WAS A TREASURE FROM SOME FARAWAY FOREIGN LAND.
海ノ中ニ居マス
わたしヲ
見ツケテ
"I'M IN THE OCEAN. PLEASE FIND ME."
ザ"ザ"ン
LIKE IT WAS A MESSAGE FROM SOMEONE WHO DIED.
ザ"ァァン
ザ"ザ"ァァン
I GOT AN AWFUL FEELING.

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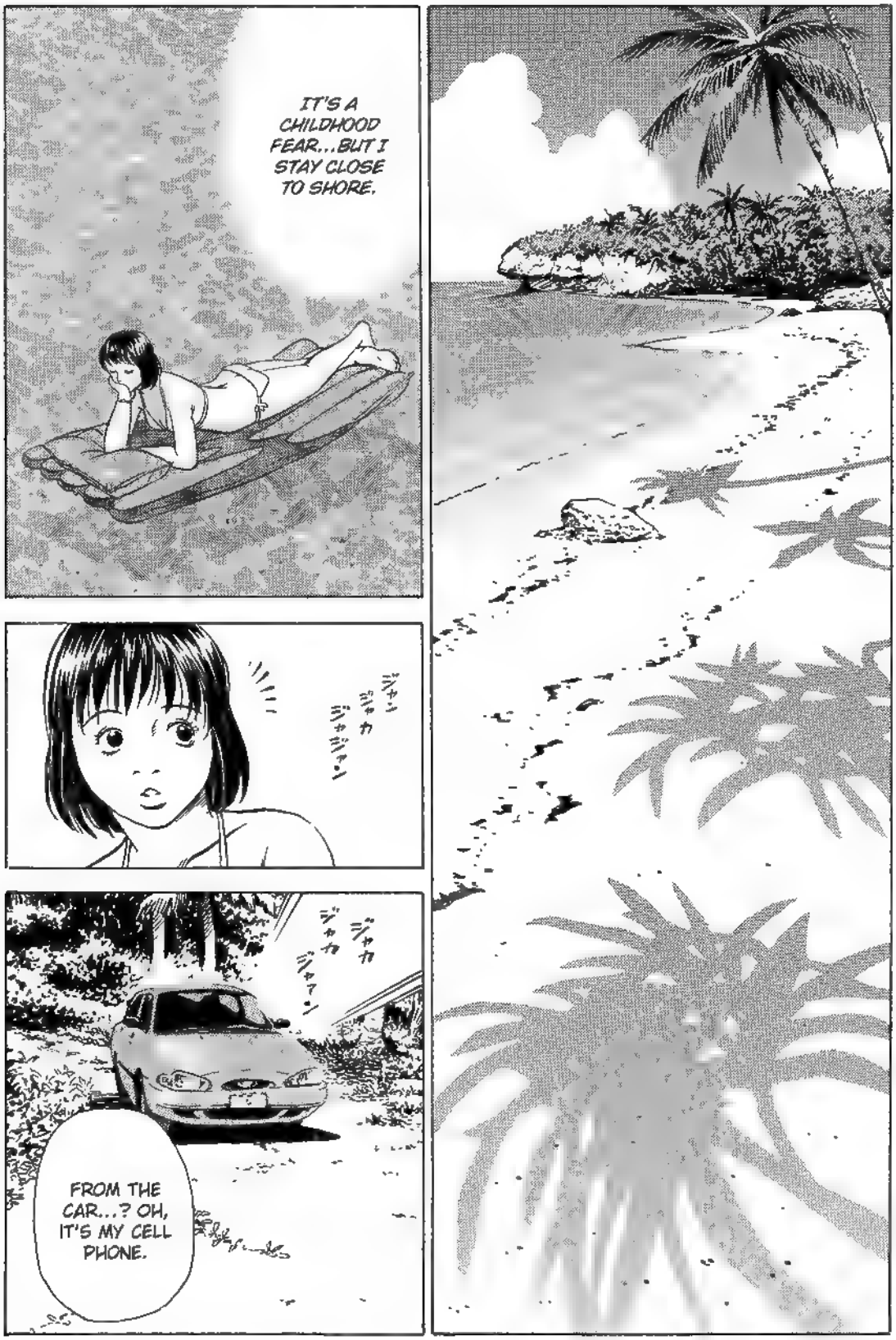
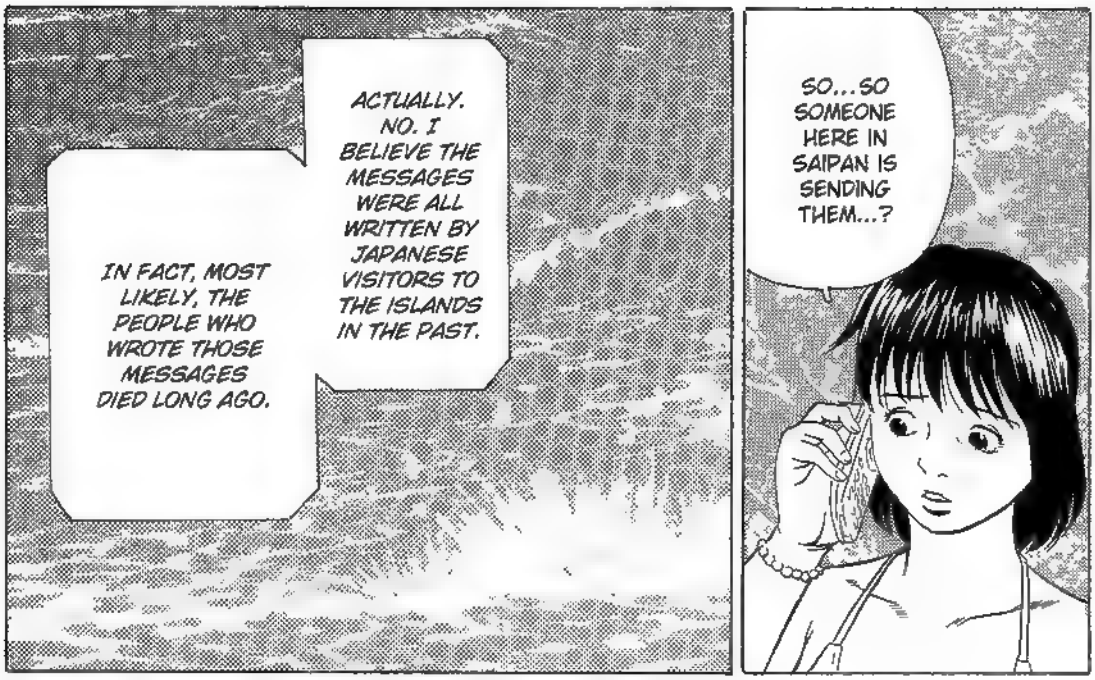
ユラ
...BUT IT ONLY FLOATED FEEBLY FOR A WHILE, AS IF TRYING TO SWIM.
ポ
ポォン
I THREW THAT BOTTLE BACK INTO THE OCEAN...
ゴ
THEN IT SANK, LIKE IT WAS EXHAUSTED.
AND I LEFT THAT PLACE LIKE I WAS FLEEING FROM SOMETHING.
ゴ
I FELT THE OCEAN STARING AT ME FROM DEEP BELOW, WITH A GREEN AND INTENSE GAZE.
FROM THAT DAY, I NEVER MUCH ENJOYED GOING INTO THE SEA.

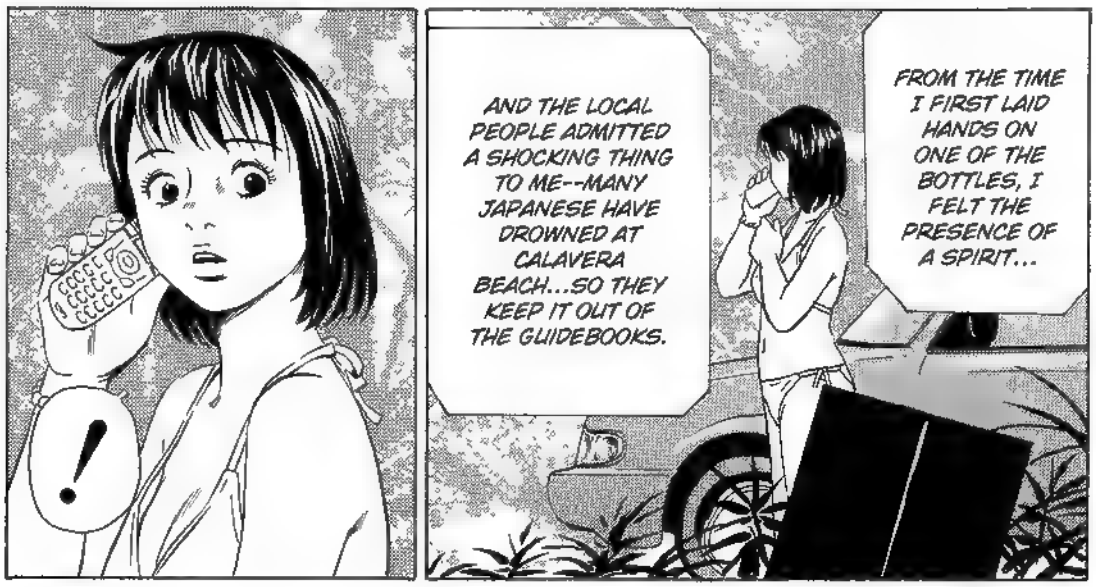

IT'S A CHILDHOOD FEAR...BUT I STAY CLOSE TO SHORE.
ジャン ジャカ ジャジャン
ジャカ ジャカ ジャ～ン
FROM THE CAR...? OH, IT'S MY CELL PHONE.

MS. YUMI IWAHARA? THIS IS A LITTLE OUT OF THE SUN, OUT OF THE BLUE SKY, AS IT WERE...HA-HA.
UM... HUH?
UHHH...CELL PHONE, CELL PHONE, WHERE IS IT? WHO COULD BE CALLING ME NOW?
HELLO?
UM...EXCUSE ME, WHO IS THIS?
THEY TOLD ME AT THE RENTAL CAR AGENCY THAT YOU WERE HEADED FOR CALAVERA BEACH. YOU KNOW, I'D ALSO LIKE TO GO THERE, BUT I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE IT IS.
RIGHT. THIS IS GOING TO SOUND A LITTLE STRANGE, BUT I'M INVESTIGATING A MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE.
DETECTIVE ...?
OH, EXCUSE ME, PLEASE. MY NAME IS AKIBA. I'M A DETECTIVE.

!
YES. THE MESSAGE DOESN'T CONTAIN A NAME OR ADDRESS. IT JUST SAYS, "I'M IN THE OCEAN. PLEASE FIND ME."
MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE...?
海ノ中ニ居ユ
わたシヲ
見ツケテ
DOES THAT SOUND FAMILIAR...? THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL BOTTLES JUST LIKE IT FOUND OVER THE YEARS.
THAT'S RIGHT... THE AREA AROUND THE BEACH WHERE YOU ARE NOW.
2001 06 19
2002 05 30
1995 02 06
2003 01 19
2003 01 19
1987 03 16
THEY SEEM TO HAVE DRIFTED FROM QUITE FAR AWAY.
I'VE PUT QUITE A BIT OF RESEARCH INTO IT, MS. IWAHARA. AND WORKING BACKWARD FROM WHERE THEY WERE FOUND, AND FROM THE OCEAN CURRENTS, THEY ALL SEEM TO HAVE COME FROM NORTHERN SAIPAN.


ACTUALLY. NO. I BELIEVE THE MESSAGES WERE ALL WRITTEN BY JAPANESE VISITORS TO THE ISLANDS IN THE PAST.
IN FACT, MOST LIKELY, THE PEOPLE WHO WROTE THOSE MESSAGES DIED LONG AGO.
SO...SO SOMEONE HERE IN SAIPAN IS SENDING THEM...?

YES. I'M A DETECTIVE, BUT I'M SORT OF FAMILIAR WITH THIS KIND OF THING.
GHOSTS ...?!
MS. IWAHARA... THEY WERE WRITTEN BY GHOSTS.


!
AND THE LOCAL PEOPLE ADMITTED A SHOCKING THING TO ME--MANY JAPANESE HAVE DROWNED AT CALAVERA BEACH...SO THEY KEEP IT OUT OF THE GUIDEBOOKS.
FROM THE TIME I FIRST LAID HANDS ON ONE OF THE BOTTLES, I FELT THE PRESENCE OF A SPIRIT...

WH WHAT AM I GONNA DO? ARE THEY EVEN GOING TO BELIEVE ME...?
SO COULD YOU LET YOUR FRIENDS KNOW RIGHT AWAY MS. IWAHARA...?
Y-YEAH.
THEY'RE ALREADY ALL THE WAY OUT THERE!
THEY DIDN'T EVEN PAY ATTEN-TION...
SHIZUKO! MASAYO! HEY, LISTEN UP!

SHIZUKO! MASAYO!
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ミシャ
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WHERE'D THEY GO...?!

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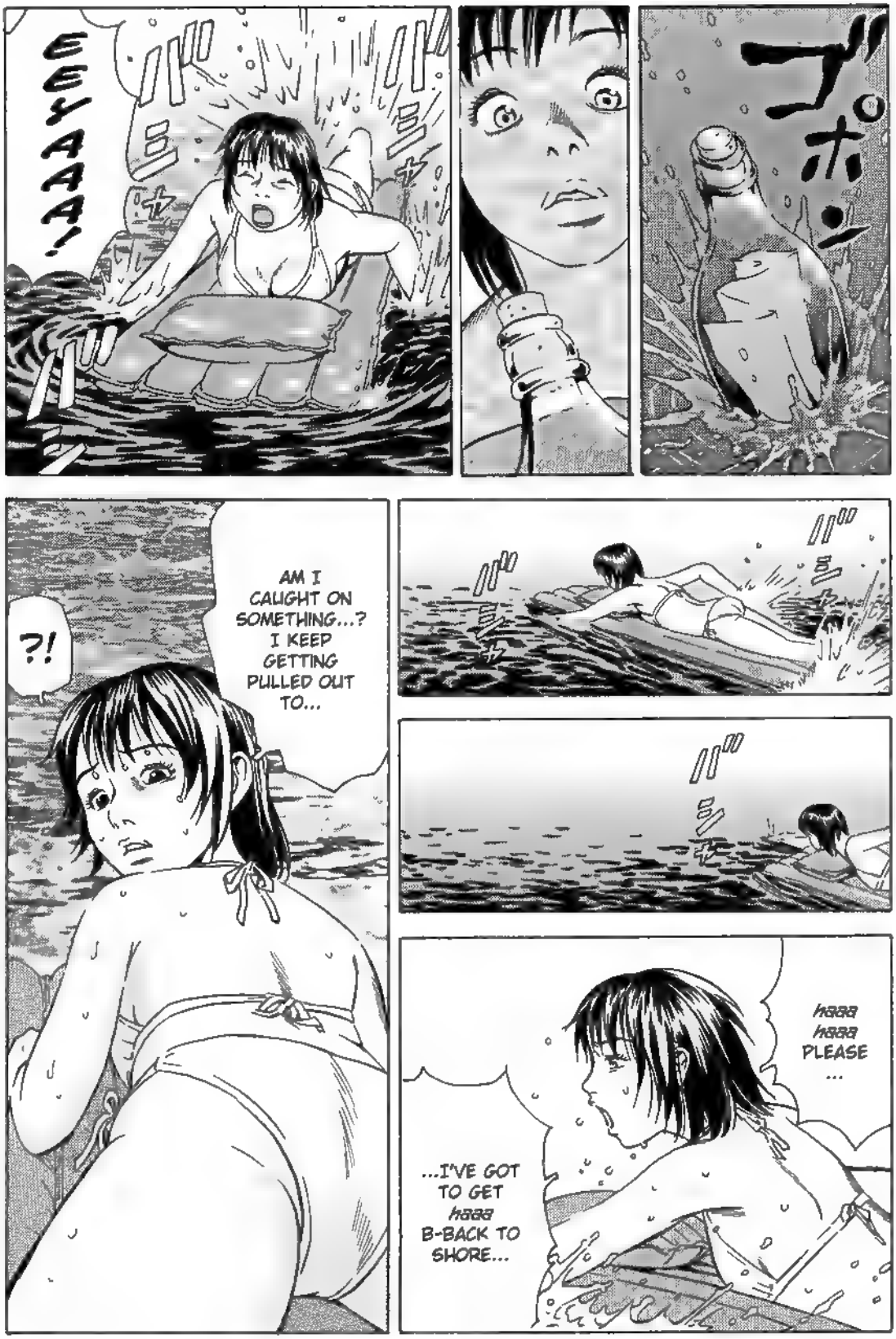
ザァァン
HAAA!

I'VE GOT TO FIND THEM GET HELD
IS IT EBB TIDE ?
I DRIFTED ALL THIS WAY...
I...I CAN'T GET ANY CLOSER...
WH-WHY WHY WHY IS THE CURRENT SO STRONG ...?

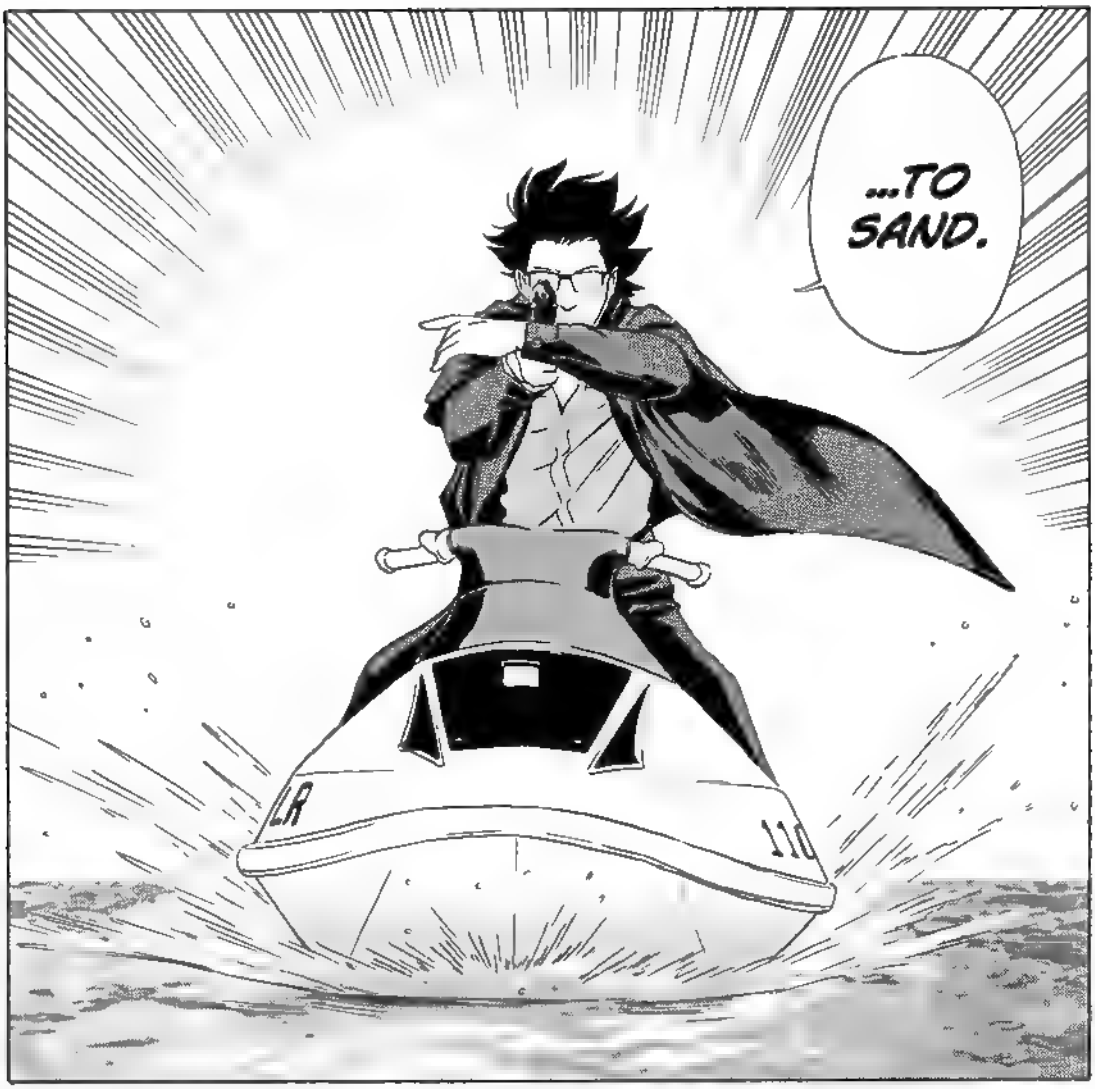
BUT THEY'RE BOTH SUCH GOOD SWIMMERS ...
!
W-WERE THEY WAVING ...?
...OR WERE THEY DROWNING ...?!
...WAS THERE... WAS THERE SOMEONE BEHIND THEM...?
ザァァァン
ザァァ
THERE'S SOMETHING DOWN THERE...
...COMING TO THE SURFACE.
ドクン

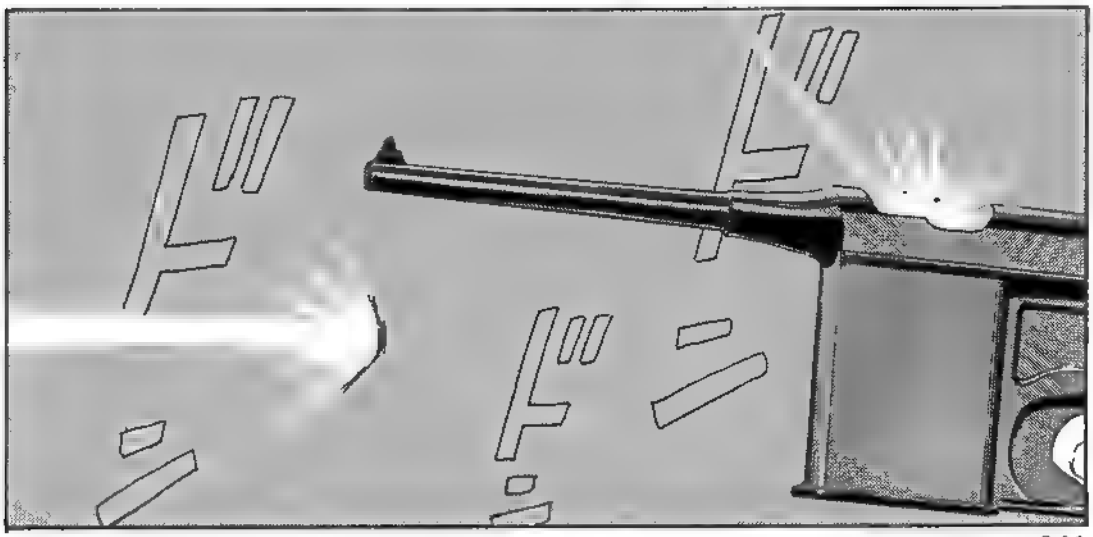

EEYAA!
ゴポ
?!
AM I CAUGHT ON SOMETHING...? I KEEP GETTING PULLED OUT TO...
...I'VE GOT TO GET haaa B-BACK TO SHORE...
haaa haaa PLEASE ...

NO!
LET GO!
NO...
!

DON'T
DON'T!
DON'T TAKE ME INTO THE OCEAN!

DEAD SOULS, SUNK BENEATH THE WAVES.
WITH MY GUN I ADMONISH YOU. I SEEK YOU AND I SOUND YOU.
カチリ
ジャコン
カチカチカチ
glup
H-HELP ...
koff
koff
FROM DROWN... TO DRIFT...


...TO SAND.



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ゴボボ…
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あ
ARE YOU
Right? OR
WRONG?
!

—SHIT.

...I'VE FOUND YOU ALL... AT LAST.
FIND US.

DO YOU REMEMBER MY VOICE? STRANGE MAN CALLING OUT OF THE BLUE...?
...WHO ARE YOU?
MS. IWAHARA ...?
koff

MR....MR. AKIBA...? WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT...?
SH-SHIZUKO! MASAYO! WHERE ARE THEY?
THEY'RE GOING TO BE FINE. WE FOUND THEM DRIFTING, BUT ALIVE. THEY'RE AT THE HOSPITAL NOW.
WE BROKE THE CURRENTS OF A CURSE.
IT'S ABOUT A WAR THAT HAPPENED A LONG TIME AGO, BUT STILL WITHIN LIVING MEMORY.
SO MANY, THEY COULDN'T BE AT REST...SENDING OUT MESSAGES, STILL CALLING THEIR COUNTRYMEN...
AT THE END OF THE PACIFIC WAR, MANY JAPANESE DIED HERE. SOME WERE KILLED IN COMBAT...SOME COMMITTED SUICIDE OUT OF FEAR OF WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THEM.
CURSE ...?
YES, THAT'S RIGHT.

SAYING... FIND ME

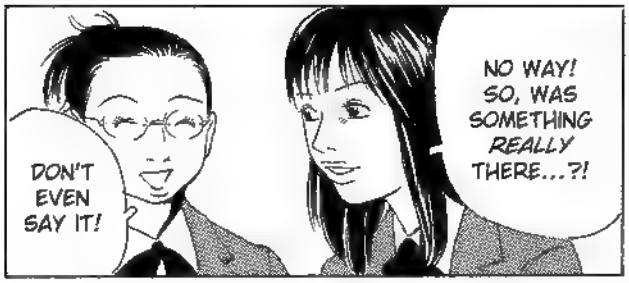
OF COURSE THEY FIND THEM ON THE ISLANDS NOW AND AGAIN. GRANDPARENT'S AND GREAT-GRANDPARENT'S IT'S A TOURIST SPOT TODAY BUT...
"THE BONES... THE BONES ARE STILL HERE...?

...SOME REMEMBER IT WAS THE GRAVE OF TEN THOUSAND PEOPLE

MAIL#17 ··· END

MAIL #18
RUINS

KiroKiro
HEY, HEY, THAT WAS A SPOOKFEST THE OTHER DAY AT THAT OLD BUILDING.


NO WAY! SO, WAS SOMETHING *REALLY* THERE...?!
DON'T EVEN SAY IT!

MIWA WAVED THE FLASH-LIGHT AROUND AND DASHED OUTTA THERE! SHE WAS *SOOO* SCARED!
THAT'S 'CAUSE I THOUGHT I HEARD A VOICE!

OOO! LOOK OUT, MIWA! IT'S RIGHT BEHIND YOU!
CUT IT *OUT!* IT WAS SO SCARY, I DROPPED THE FLASHLIGHT!

LISTEN, I SAW IT ON THE INTERNET. FIRST, SHUT YOUR EYES. THEN, PICTURE SOME PEOPLE YOU KNOW IN YOUR HOUSE...
TELL US, NARUSHI.
HUH? NO. WHAT?
OH! I JUST REMEMBERED-- THERE'S AN EASY WAY TO KNOW IF THERE'S A GHOST THERE OR NOT. KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT?
OKAY, NOW... UM...
OH! WE'LL DO IT THIS WAY, TAKE THE SAME NUMBER OF SUGAR STICKS AS PEOPLE YOU INVITED.
YEAH.
OKAY...I CAN SEE THEM.
NO WAY! I'VE GOT TEN PEOPLE!
UMM... SEVEN?
AND THEN, WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT THEIR NAMES, TELL ME HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE THERE.

RIGHT. NOW SAY YOUR GUESTS' NAMES ONE BY ONE AND PUT THE STICKS DOWN ON THE TABLE.
UH, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6...
WAIT, WAIT! LET ME TAKE MINE!
...JUST HURRY UP, OKAY?
UM...HEY... WHAT'S YOUR REAL NAME AGAIN, NARUSHI...?
ALIVE? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
IT'S JUST SHORT FOR NARUSHIMA. BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO USE THEIR REAL NAMES. AS LONG AS YOU KNOW THEY'RE ALIVE...
...THAT PERSON IS THE GHOST!
THAT'S HOW IT WORKS! IF THERE'S A GUEST IN YOUR HOUSE YOU CAN PICTURE BUT CAN'T NAME...

...YES! I GOT EVERYONE'S NAME.
ME, TOO...
WHAAA! I MIGHT BE IN TROUBLE!
HOLD ON... INOUE-SAN... KOBAYASHI-KUN...
WHAT ABOUT YOU, MIWA?
I... HAVE ONE LEFT.

NOTHING... THERE'S NO PRESENCE. THERE ARE NO GHOSTS HERE
WHAT ABOUT OVER THERE, MIKOTO...?
チリン

I WONDER. A MAN WHO, LADEN WITH DEBT STICKS HIS HEAD IN SOME MACHINERY HERE AND WRENCHES HIS OWN NECK...THAT MUCH IS TRUE.
AND I FELT A PRESENCE FROM THE PICTURES OF THE BUILDING THE OWNER SHOWED ME... THAT MUCH IS ALSO TRUE.
NO JOB, THEN?
WELL, WE BOTH LOOKED, AND FOUND NOTHING. PERHAPS WE SHOULD JUST CALL IT OFF.
MAYBE THE GHOST DIDN'T LIKE THE KIDS AND LEFT.
...ALL THESE KIDS SNEAKING IN HERE NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, PLAYING HAUNTED HOUSE, PUT THIS PLACE IN THIS CONDITION.
I THINK HE WENT HOME WITH SOMEONE.
NO... JUST THE OPPOSITE.
!

ALL RIGHT ALREADY! JUST BLAME EVERYTHING ON ME!
RIGHT... RIGHT IT'S JUST SOMETHING THAT NARUSHI MADE UP
MIWA, THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT IT'S JUST A STORY
"THANK YOU" COME AGAIN SOON!
AH HA HA HA HA!
HUH? OKAY OKAY I'M SORRY NARUSHI
I'M NOT GONNA LET YOU LOOK AT MY HOMEWORK ANYMORE...
OKAY SEE YOU
CHEER UP, MIWA-CHAN!
WE'RE TAKING OFF BYE-BYE! SEE YOU TOMORROW!

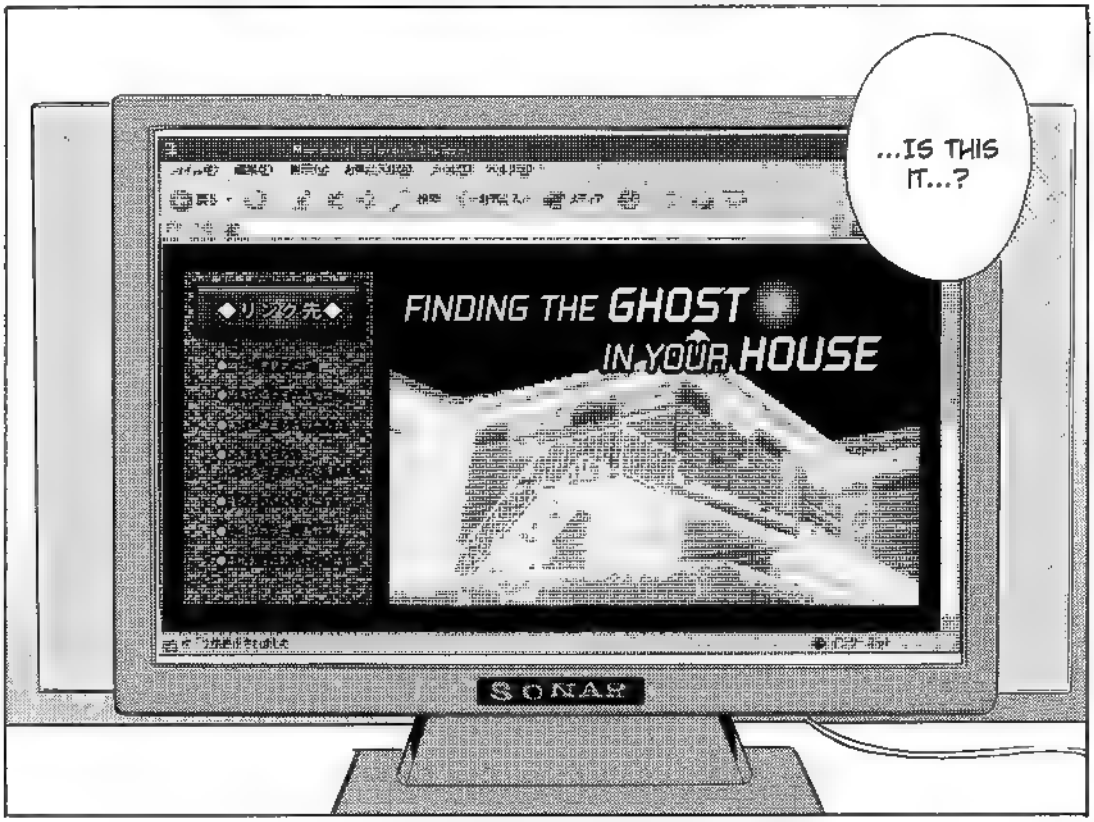
カララ…
OH--LOOKS LIKE I'M THE FIRST ONE HOME TODAY

I'M HOME...
チカ
チカ
I'M GONNA GET OUT OF THESE CLOTHES QUICK, AND WATCH SOME TV.
MIWA'S ROOM. BETTER KNOCK!
ガウン
ゴト
JUST THE FRIDGE STARTING UP... GEEZ...

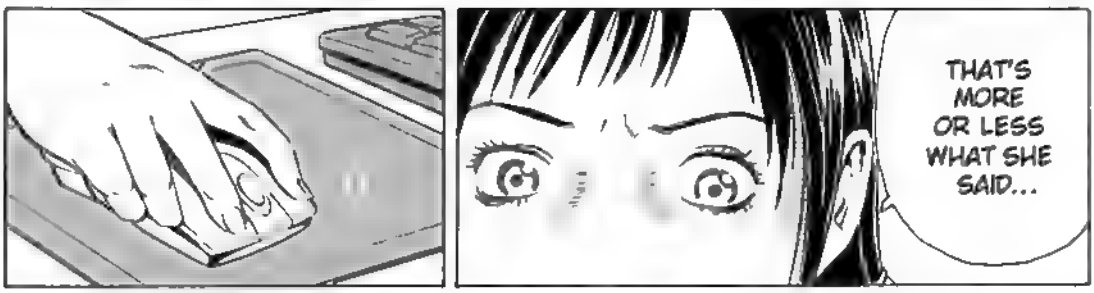
...BUT I WASN'T MAKING THAT UP.
THERE WAS SOMEBODY.
MIXED IN WITH NARUSHI, MY OTHER FRIENDS AND FAMILY... ANOTHER PERSON...
SOME RELATIVE...? A NEIGHBOR...? NO, IT'S NOT LIKE THAT...I GET THE FEELING ALMOST LIKE...LIKE HE'S BEEN LIVING HERE...
THAT PERSON...I KINDA REMEMBER WHAT HE LOOKS LIKE...BUT WHO IS HE...?

IT CAN'T BE... RIGHT?
NO... C'MON.
...THAT PERSON IS THE GHOST!
THAT'S ENOUGH! IT'S JUST NARUSHI TALKING CRAZY...
...SHE SAID IT WAS SOMETHING SHE SAW ON THE NET.
I WANNA SEE.
MSN Explorer
Windows Media Player
ピッ

FINDING THE GHOST IN YOUR HOUSE



First of all, gather around 10-20 matchsticks or coins. Then imagine yourself in your house. Now think of your family, siblings, and close friends around you. Can you see them? Next, without thinking of their names, count the number of people around you, and grab the same number of matchsticks or coins.

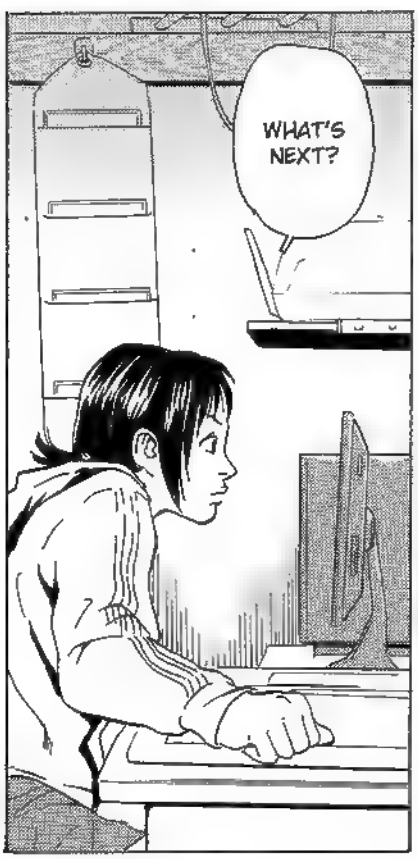


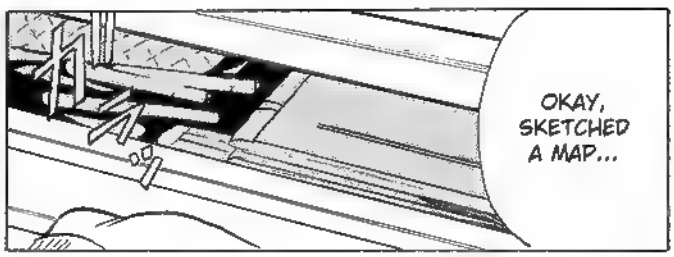
Next, say the name of the each of the people you imagined, and put down a matchstick or coin for each name.

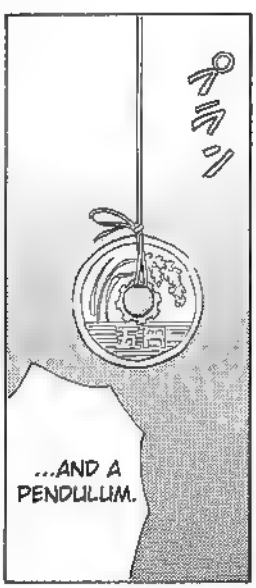
"BUT IF YOU FIND YOURSELF STILL HOLDING A MATCHSTICK OR COIN LEFT OVER, THEN BEWARE..."
"IF YOU END UP WITH NOTHING IN YOUR HAND, THEN YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY."

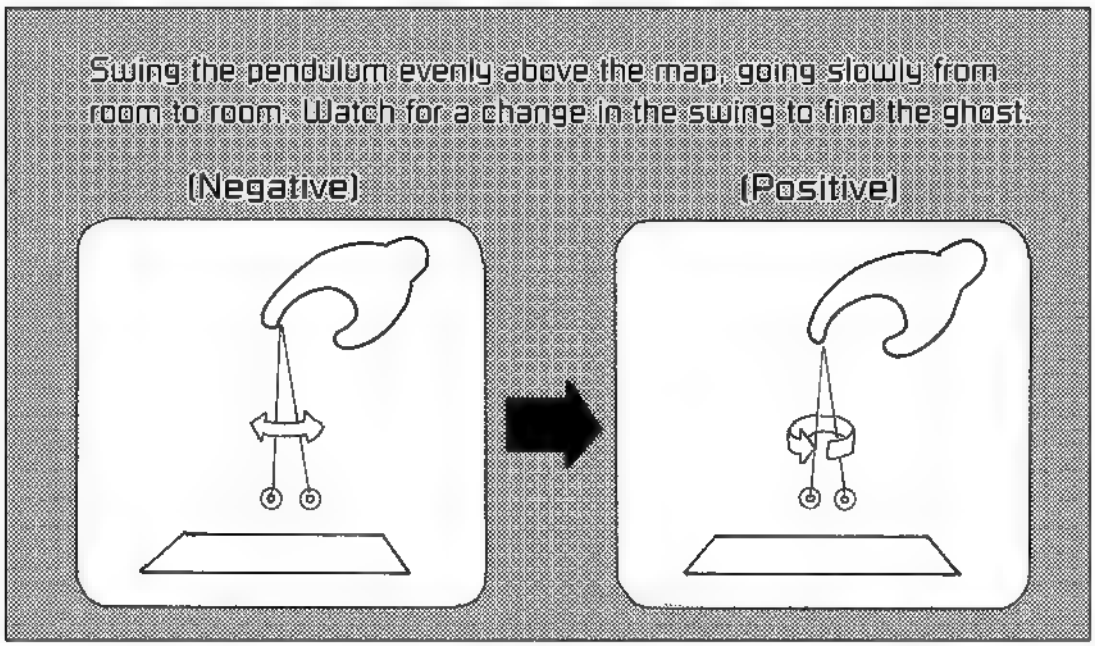
...the one left over is a ghost.

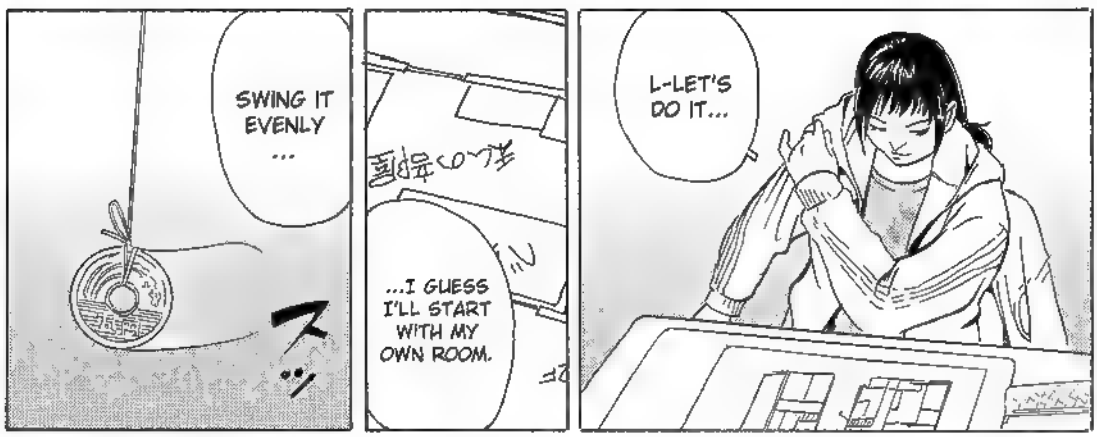
If you have a ghost in your house...
.
.
.
...you can pinpoint exactly where the ghost is using the following method.

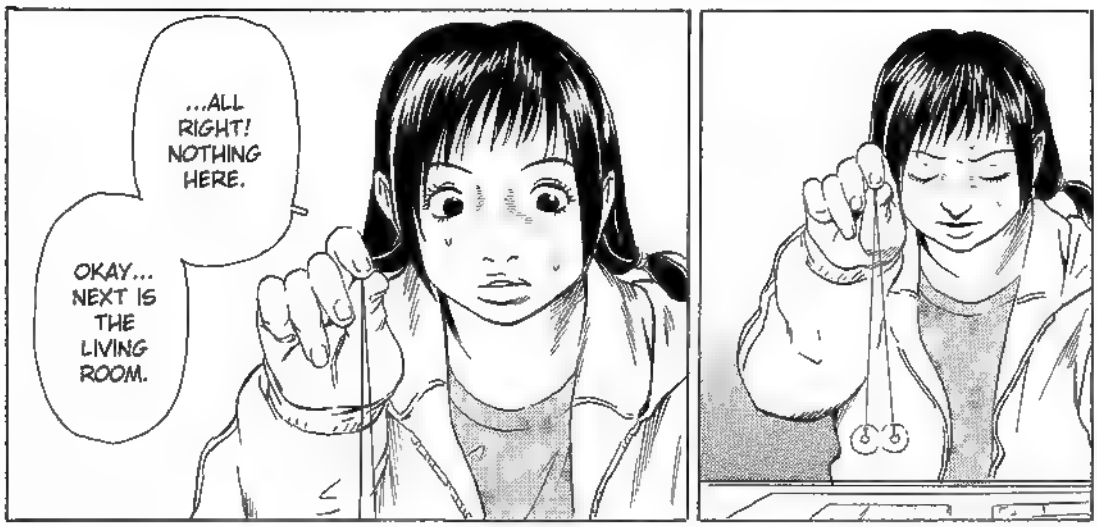







Swing the pendulum evenly above the map, going slowly from room to room. Watch for a change in the swing to find the ghost.
(Negative)
(Positive)

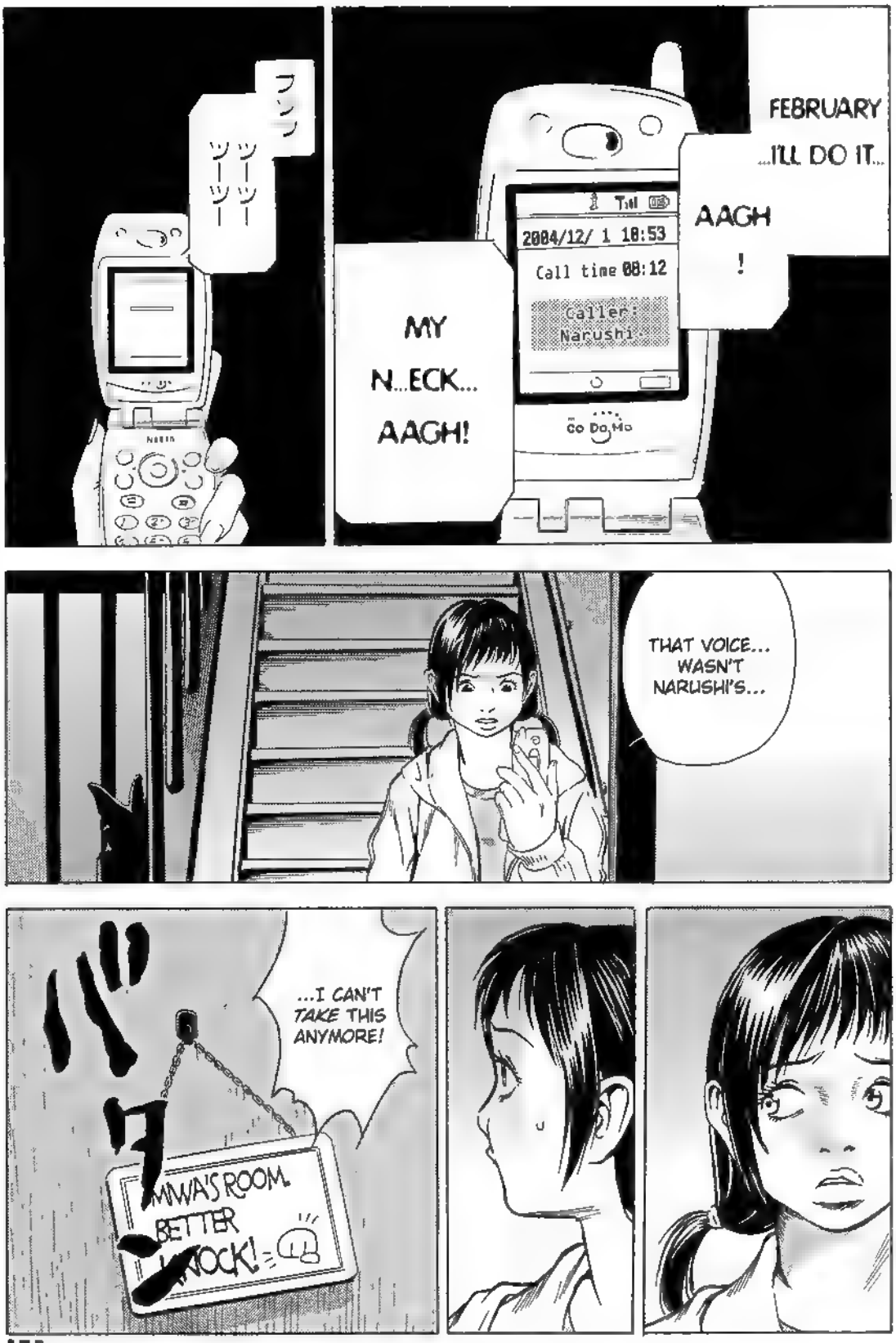

SWING IT EVENLY ...
...I GUESS I'LL START WITH MY OWN ROOM.
L-LET'S DO IT...


...ALL RIGHT! NOTHING HERE.
OKAY... NEXT IS THE LIVING ROOM.

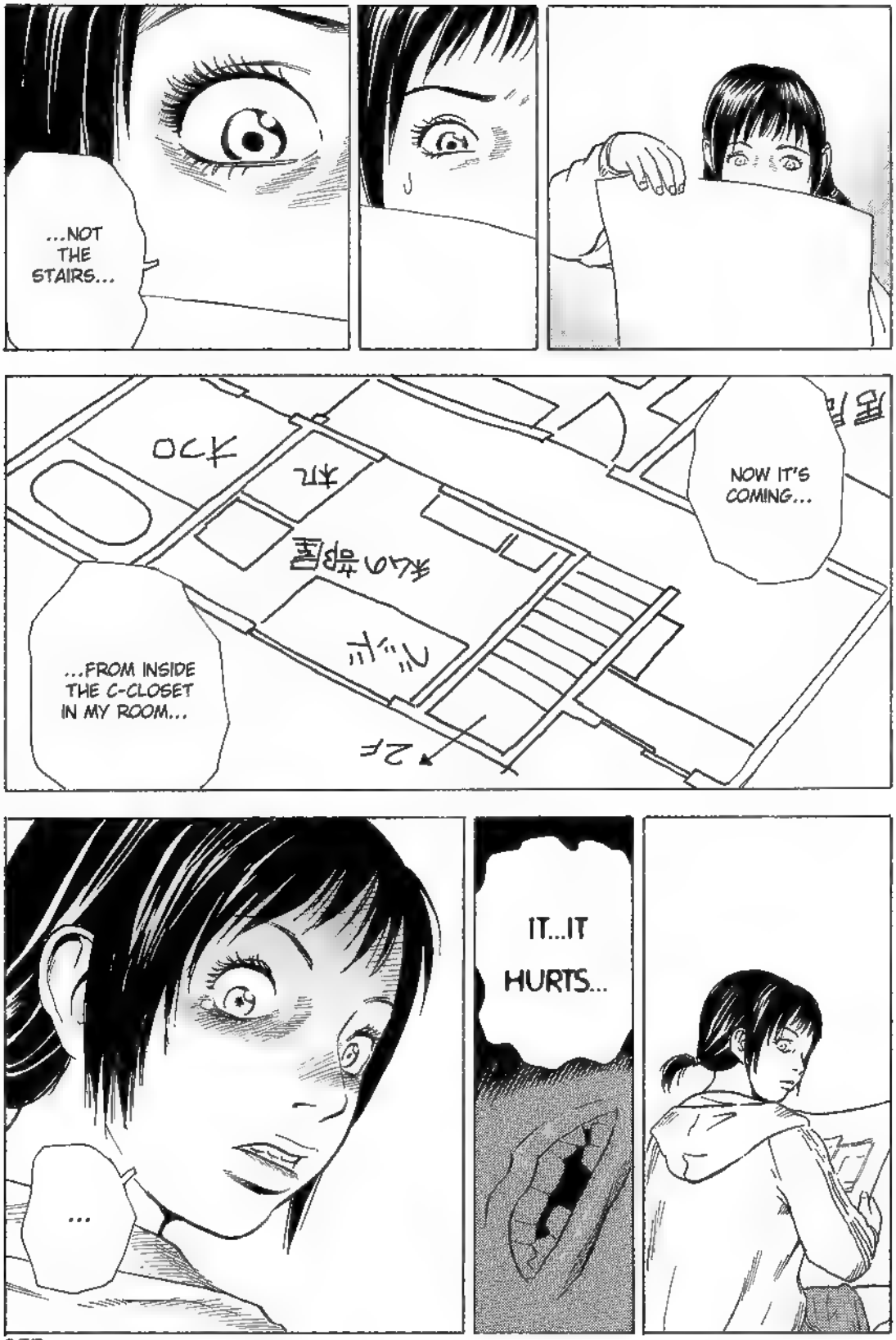
I'VE ALREADY DONE MOST OF THE HOUSE. NO RESPONSE AT ALL...
NOTHING HERE EITHER.
...OKAY, NEXT IS THE BATHROOM ...
... NOTHING ...
NOTHING THERE EITHER. OKAY THEN, NEXT IS THE KITCHEN...
...NOTHING.
...THERE'S NOTHING TO THAT STORY AFTER ALL.
IT...
THE STAIRS ...?!
...IT CHANGED.

..IS THERE...IS THERE A GHOST HERE...?
SO NOW...
ガタッ
ヒラッ
カタカタ
WHAT A TIME FOR NARUSHI TO CALL ME
ピッ
ジャカジャカ
...OH.
EEYAA!
ジャカジャカジャカジャカジャカジャカジャカジャカ

JUST A LITTLE WHILE AGO, A STRANGE GUY IN A BLACK COAT CAME TO MY HOUSE. HE SAID HE WAS LOOKING FOR THE PEOPLE WHO WENT TO THE OLD BUILDING THE OTHER DAY.
HUH... WHY?!
HELLO, MIWA? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? NOTHING GOING ON...?
WH-WHAT'S UP...?
HE SAID THE BUILDING WAS REALLY DANGEROUS.
I DON'T KNOW IF I BELIEVE HIM...BUT HE SAID THERE REALLY WAS A GHOST THERE.
B-BUT...
KKRRRRKKK... GIVE...DON'T... NO... KKRRRKK... AAHH... KKRRRKKK...
...SO I KRRRRRKK THAT YOU WERE...
HUH... WHAT?
HE THINKS THAT THE GHOST KRRRRK HOME WITH ONE OF US...
WHAT? WHAT WAS THAT, NARUSHI ?!
2004/12/ 1 18:53


フン
ツーツーツーツー
2004/12/ 1 10:53
Call time 00:12
Caller: Narushi
FEBRUARY
...I'LL DO IT...
AAGH
!
MY
N...ECK...
AAGH!
THAT VOICE... WASN'T NARUSHI'S...
バン
...I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANYMORE!
MWA'S ROOM
BETTER
KNOCK!

...I'LL DO IT...
MOM! BROTHER! COME HOME QUICK!
I DON'T CARE IF IT'S DAD! JUST HURRY UP AND COME HOME!
HURRY!
...WHY...
THAT VOICE JUST NOW...CAME FROM RIGHT BEHIND ME.
2F


...NOT THE STAIRS...
NOW IT'S COMING...
...FROM INSIDE THE C-CLOSET IN MY ROOM...
IT...IT HURTS...
...

...I CAN'T TURN MY NECK.

I'LL PAY BY FEBRUARY... SO
...I'M IN PAIN... REALLY
...JUST WAIT WAIT A LITTLE LONGER MY NECK
WH-WHO...?

LOOK, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!
WHO ARE YOU? GET OUT!
LOOK...
...SEE...

NO! GET AWAY FROM ME!
P- PLEASE ...
ゴゴゴゴ
YOU YOU WANT ME TO GO ?
ゴゴゴゴ
BUT... BUT HOW...
ゴゴゴゴ

WHEN
MY
NECK
MY
NEEEE-
EEECK...

ズキュン
ARE

SH
SHUT
SHUT UP!
FUCK OFF!
SHUT
THE
FUCK
UP!
DEAD
SOUL,
BROKEN
AND
WHIRLING.
WITH MY
GUN I
ADMONISH
YOU I HALT
YOU AND I
STILL YOU
FROM
TURN TO
TWIST
TO
STOP

EVERYTHING'S FINE... THAT WAS THE SOUND OF THE GUN SHOOTING A BLANK.
WHA? MIWA? THE GUN...
MIWA MIWA
ARE YOU OKAY? HEY!
カ"
ラ
"ン
LET'S GO INSIDE
MIWA!

IS THAT IT... AKIBA?
MMM... YES...THIS MIGHT BE THE CAUSE.
MIWA! HANG ON! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
N-NARUSHI ...
HEY! WHAT DID YOU DO TO MIWA?! I BROUGHT YOU HERE 'CAUSE YOU SAID YOU WERE A MEDIUM!
WAIT A SEC! YOU THINK YOU CAN JUST BARGE INTO SOMEONE'S ROOM?! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE...? YOU KNOW. AND YOU WERE THE ONES WHO BARGED IN.
IT'S FAINT, BUT A SPIRIT MARK REMAINS...

FOR THE OBON FESTIVAL EACH SUMMER. PAPER LANTERNS GUIDE THE SPIRITS.
DO YOU KNOW THE LANTERNS THAT ARE LIT FOR THE DEAD?
WHAT ...?!
BUT YOU DROPPED YOUR FLASHLIGHT AND RAN HOME.
PEOPLE KNOW TO WALK SLOWLY, SO THE LIGHT DOESN'T FRIGHTEN DEAD SOULS.
AND THAT WRETCHED THING FOLLOWED YOU IN A PANIC. NEVER DEAL WITH GHOSTS TO TEST YOUR COURAGE.
IT'S BEST LEFT TO THE PROFES-SIONALS... HOWEVER STRANGE.

MAIL#18···END

MAIL

CHANGE OF ADDRESS!

Vol. 3 is the last volume of MAIL . . . but it's not the last adventure of Akiba! Just like the ghosts he pursues, the detective is crossing over . . . to another manga, that is—creator Housui Yamazaki's collaboration with Eiji Otsuka, *The Kurosagi Corpse Delivery Service*! Open *Kurosagi* Vol. 4 for one more round . . . from the barrel of Kagutsuchi!

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MAIL VOL. 3

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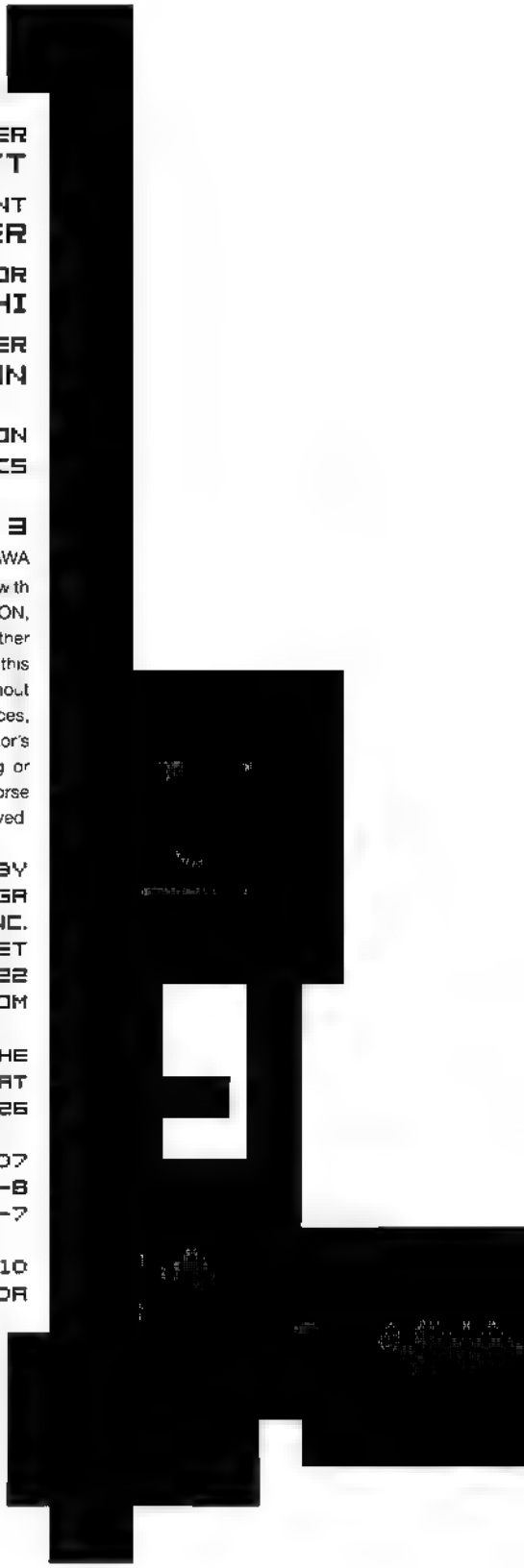


Note to reader: The page numbers in the following glossary section refer to the numbers that are actually on the page, and not the number the page may have in the Dark Horse Digital edition. Please check the numbers at the bottom of the actual pages when using this reference.

DEAD LETTER OFFICE:

SOUND FX GLOSSARY AND NOTES ON *MAIL* VOL. 3

by Douglas Varenas

Introduction and additional comments by the editor

To increase your enjoyment of the distinctive Japanese visual style of this manga, we've included a guide to the sound effects (or "FX") used in this manga. It is suggested the reader *not* constantly consult this glossary as they read through, but regard it as supplemental information, in the manner of footnotes. If you want to imagine it being read aloud by Osaka, after the manner of her lecture to Sakaki on hemorrhoids in episode five, please go right ahead. In either Yuki Matsuoka or Kira Vincent-Davis's voice—I like them both.

Japanese, like English, did not independently invent its own writing system, but instead borrowed and modified the system used by the then-dominant cultural power in their part of the world. We still call the letters we use to write English today the "Roman" alphabet, for the simple reason that about 1600 years ago the earliest English speakers, living on the frontier of the Roman Empire, began to use the same letters the Romans used to write their Latin language to write out English.

Around that very same time, on the other side of the planet, Japan, like England, was another example of an island civilization lying across the sea from a great empire, in this case, that of China. Likewise the Japanese borrowed from the Chinese writing system, which then as now consists of thousands of complex symbols—today in China officially referred to in the Roman alphabet as *hanzi*, but which the Japanese pronounce as *kanji*. For example, on the front cover of *Mail*, the four characters you see at the bottom left are examples of kanji, in this case, how the creator's name—Housui Yamazaki—is written in Japanese. Of course, all of these kanji were hanzi first; although the Japanese also later did invent some original kanji of their own, just as new hanzi have been created over the centuries as Chinese evolved.

Note that whereas both kanji and hanzi are methods of writing foreign words in Roman letters, the spelling "kanji" gives English readers a fairly good idea of how the Japanese word is really pronounced—*khan-gee*—whereas the spelling "hanzi" does not—in Mandarin Chinese it sounds something like *n-tsuh*. The reason is fairly simple: whereas the most commonly used method of writing Japanese in Roman letters, called the Hepburn system, was developed by a native English speaker, the most commonly used method of writing Chinese in Roman letters, called the Pinyin system, was developed by native Mandarin speakers. In fact Pinyin, by whose rules we get the spelling "hanzi," was developed to help teach Mandarin pronunciation to speakers of other Chinese dialects; unlike Hepburn, by whose rules we get the spelling "kanji," Pinyin was never intended as a learning tool for English-speakers *per se*, and hence has no particular obligation to "make sense" to English speakers or, indeed, users of the other languages spelled with the Roman alphabet.

Whereas the various dialects of Chinese are written entirely in hanzi, it is not practical to render the Japanese language entirely in them. To compare once more, English is a notoriously difficult language in which to spell properly, and this is in part because it uses an alphabet designed for another language, Latin, whose sounds are different (for example, the ancient Romans actually pronounced "Caesar" like "Keyser" from *The Usual Suspects*, and they said their "V" like our "W"—which might make you laugh until some gladiator runs a sword through your guts). The challenges the Japanese faced in using the Chinese writing system for their own language were even greater, for whereas spoken English and Latin are at least from a common language family, spoken Japanese, despite its geographical proximity, is unrelated to any of the various dialects of spoken Chinese. The

complicated writing system Japanese evolved represents an adjustment to these differences.

When the Japanese borrowed hanzi to become kanji, what they were getting was a way to write out (remember, they already had ways to *say*) their vocabulary. Nouns, verbs, many adjectives, the names of places and people—that's what kanji are used for, the fundamental data of the written language. The practical use and processing of that "data"—its grammar and pronunciation—is another matter entirely. Because spoken Japanese neither sounds nor functions like Chinese, the first work-around tried was a system called *manyogana*, where individual kanji were picked to represent certain syllables in Japanese (a similar method is still used in Chinese today to spell out foreign names).

The commentary in *Katsuya Terada's The Monkey King* (also available from Dark Horse) notes the importance that not only Chinese, but Indian culture had on Japan at this time in history—particularly, through Buddhism. It is believed the Northeast Indian *Siddham* script studied by Kukai (died 835 AD), founder of the Shingon sect of Japanese Buddhism, inspired him to create the solution for writing Japanese still used today. Kukai is credited with the idea of taking the manyogana and making shorthand versions of them now simply known as *kana*. The improvement in efficiency was dramatic—a kanji that had been used previously to represent a sound, that might have taken a dozen strokes to draw, was now reduced to three or four.

For example, look at the front cover of *Mail*, at the three characters in black right below the gun. These are kana, and, although somewhat pixilated by the Atari 2600 design style, you can see they're considerably simpler to write than the four kanji mentioned above. In fact, these kana spell out "MAIL" (literally they are ME-I-RU, the closest approximation Japanese sounds can make to our word *mail*) and therefore can be written in three characters instead of the four it takes in English.

Unlike the original kanji it was based on, the new kana had *only* a sound meaning. And unlike the thousands of kanji, there are only 46 kana, which, besides being useful to represent foreign words like *mail*, can also be used to spell out any word in the Japanese language, including the many ordinarily written with kanji (Japanese keyboards work on this principle). The same set of 46 kana is written two different ways depending on their intended use; cursive style, *hiragana*, and block style, *katakana*. The most important role kana play in Japanese is to indicate grammar such as subject and object identification, prepositions, verb conjugations, etc., but naturally, sound FX in manga are also almost always written out using kana.

As you can see from the example of "ME-I-RU" for *mail* above, kana works somewhat differently than the Roman alphabet. For example, while there are separate kana for each of the five vowels (the Japanese order is not A-E-I-O-U as in English, but A-I-U-E-O), there are, except for "n," no separate kana for consonants (the middle "n" in the word *ninja* illustrates this exception). Instead, kana work by grouping together consonants with vowels: for example, there are five kana for sounds starting with "k," depending on which vowel follows it—in Japanese vowel order, they go KA, KI, KU, KE, KO. The next set of kana begins with "s" sounds, so SA, SHI, SU, SE, SO, and so on. You will observe this kind of consonant-vowel pattern in the FX listings for *Mail* Vol. 3 below.

The block-style katakana are almost always the kind used for manga sound FX, but on occasion (often when the sound is one made by a person) hiragana are used instead. In *Mail* Vol. 3 you can see one of several examples on page 83, panel 5, as the ghost screams out "UGYAAA!" which in hiragana style is written うぎゃああ. Note its more cursive appearance compared to the other FX. If it had been written in katakana style, it would look like ウギャアア.

To see how to use this glossary, take an example from page 5: "**5.2 FX: CHIRIRIN** [bell jingling]" 5.2 means the FX is the one on page 5, in panel 2. CHIRIRIN is the sounds these kana—チリリン—literally stands for. After the dash comes an explanation of what the sound represents. Note that in cases where there are two or more different sounds in a single panel, an extra

number is used to differentiate them from right to left; or, in cases where right and left are less clear, in clockwise order.

The use of kana in these FX also illustrates another aspect of written Japanese—its flexible reading order. For example, the way you're reading the pages and panels of this book in general: going from right-to-left, and from top to bottom—is the order in which Japanese is also written in most forms of print: books, magazines, and newspapers. However, if you examine those kana examples given above, you'll notice something interesting. Several of them read "Western" style—left-to-right! In fact, many of the FX in *Mail* (and manga in general) read left-to-right.

You can find another example of this flexibility on the front cover of *Mail* Vol. 3, which (in what is perhaps a Dark Horse first) is exactly the same as the original Japanese front cover. And on that cover, both the kana for "MAIL" and the kanji for creator Housui Yamazaki's name are written left-to-right (note the kanji version of the name, however, is written in the customary Japanese style of last name first; thus 山崎峰水 is "Yamazaki Housui"). In other words, Japanese doesn't simply read "the other way" from English; the Japanese themselves are used to reading it in several different directions; left-to-right, for example, is also the more common way text is written on Japanese web pages.

As might be expected, some FX "sound" short, and others "sound" long. Manga represent this in different ways. One of many examples of "short sounds" in *Mail* Vol. 3 is to be found back on the first story page of the volume, in panel 5.4's KYU! Note the small ッ mark at the end. This is ordinarily the katakana for the sound "tsu," but its half-size use at the end of FX like this means the sound is the kind which stops or cuts off suddenly; that's why this sound is written as KYU and not KYUTSU—you don't "pronounce" the TSU in such cases. Here the translator has represented the "sudden stopping" effect with an exclamation point.

There are three different ways you may see "long sounds"—where a vowel sound is extended—written out as FX. One is with an ellipsis, as in 26.2.2's GORORO. Another is with an extended line, as in 38.1's KINKO-N. Still another is by simply repeating a vowel several times, as in 39.7's BUROOON OOOON. You may also see these methods combined. As a visual element in manga, FX are an art rather than a science, and are used in a less rigorous fashion than kana are in standard written Japanese.

The explanation of what the sound represents may sometimes be surprising; but every culture "hears" sounds differently. Note that manga FX do not even necessarily represent literal sounds; for example 165.4.3's BIKU—in manga this is the figurative "sound" of being startled. Such "mimetic" words, which represent an imagined sound, or even a state of mind, are called *gitaigo* in Japanese. Like the onomatopoeic *giseigo* (the words used to represent literal sounds—i.e., most FX in this glossary are classified as giseigo), they are also used in colloquial speech and writing. A Japanese, for example, might say that something bounced by saying PURIN, or talk about eating by saying MUGU MUGU. It's something like describing chatter in English by saying "yadda yadda yadda" instead.

One important last note: all these spelled-out kana vowels should be pronounced as they are in Japanese: "A" as *ah*, "I" as *eee*, "U" as *ooh*, "E" as *eh*, and "O" as *oh*.

4 Sharp-eyed readers (wearing glasses to deflect the gaze of the dead, no doubt) will have noticed that the last chapter of *Mail* Vol. 2 was #12, whereas the first chapter of *Mail* Vol. 3 is #14, making just the kind of superstitious hotel elevator jump of the kind alluded to in last volume's "Dead Letter Office." But *Mail* didn't skip this story out of fear; the unofficial #13th chapter is Akiba's appearance in *The Kurosagi Corpse Delivery Service*, Vol. 4 (see note on p. 189).

5.2 **FX: CHIRIRIN** [bell jingling]

5.4 **FX: KYU!** [sound of shoes squeaking/scuffing]

8.2 **FX: JAAAA JAAAA JAAAA** [cicadas chirping]

8.3 **FX: ZAAAN** [sound of surf]

9.1 **FX: ZA** [grass rustling]
9.4 **FX: CHIRIIN** [bell jingling]
9.5 **FX: ZA!** [head whisking]
10.4.1 **FX: CHIRIIN** [bell jingling]
10.4.2 **FX: CHIRIN** [bell jingling]
10.5 **FX: CHRIRIN** [bell jingling]
11.5 **FX: CHIRIN** [bell jingling]
12.5 **FX: MI-N MI-N MI-N** [crickets]
14.5 **FX: CHIRIN** [bell jingling]
14.6 **FX: CHIRIN** [bell jingling]
15.1 **FX: CHIRIN** [bell jingling]
15.4 **FX: KU!** [grabbing cane]
15.5 **FX: ZA! ZA!** [rustling noises]
16.1 **FX: KAN** [cane hitting metal]
16.2 **FX: GIKIII** [gate creaking]
17.2.1 **FX: BECHA** [slobbering sound]
17.2.2 **FX: GUCHA** [crunching]
17.2.3 **FX: BARI** [smacking]
17.2.4 **FX: PORI** [crunching]
17.3.1 **FX: BECHA** [slobbering sound]
17.3.2 **FX: KORI** [crunch]
17.3.3 **FX: KUCHA** [crunching]
17.3.4 **FX: PARI** [lips smacking sound]
17.3.5 **FX: KORI** [crunch]
18.1 **FX: TATATATATATA!** [running/scampering]
19.2.1 **FX: KA!** [cane hitting floor]
19.2.2 **FX: KO!** [cane hitting floor]
19.5 **FX: GA!** [cane hitting floor]
21.1.1 **FX: KA!** [cane hitting floor]
21.1.2 **FX: KO!** [cane hitting floor]
21.2 **FX: KONN!** [cane hitting something]
21.4 **FX: SUSA** [touching gently]
23.2.1 **FX: POTA** [blood dripping]
23.2.2 **FX: BOTA** [blood dripping]
23.2.3 **FX: POTA** [blood dripping]
26.2.1 **FX: GOTON** [head dropping]
26.2.2 **FX: GORORO** [head rolling]
26.2.3 **FX: GORO** [head rolling]
29.2 **FX: CHRIRIN** [bell jingling]
29.4 **FX: KYU** [sound of shoes squeaking/scuffing]
31.1 **FX: DAAAAA** [gun firing]
31.2 **FX: KO-N KON KON** [bullet hitting ground]
31.5 **FX: KO** [shoe scuffing]
31.6 **FX: BACHIN** [coffin opening]
32.5 **FX: GACHIRI** [clicking]
32.6 **FX: KICHIN** [bullet loading]
33.1 **FX: GACHIN** [clip loading]
34.1 **FX: ZUKYUN** [bullet piercing]
34.3 **FX: KIN KIN KIN** [bullet hitting floor]
35.4 **FX: KARI** [scratching]
35.5 **FX: KOTO** [knocking noise]
35.6 **FX: KARI** [scratching]
36.2.1 **FX: CHIRIN** [bell jingling]
36.2.2 **FX: CHIRIRIN** [bell jingling]
36.2 Mikoto's character is quite possibly an homage to Pinoko, the sidekick of Black Jack, the hero of Osamu Tezuka's 1973-83 manga of the same name (and later an anime OAV and TV series—the 1990s version by Osamu Dezaki, available through Manga Entertainment, is particularly recommended). Akiba himself owes something to Black Jack's style—both have spiky hair, white shirts, and drape themselves in billowing black—and Pinoko, like Mikoto, was assembled from body parts, although in the former case brought to life by Tezuka's master surgeon, rather than through necromancy.
38.1 **FX: KINKO-N** [doorbell]
38.2 **FX: KINKO-N** [doorbell]
38.3 **FX: KINKO-N** [doorbell/intercom]
38.4 **FX: PETA** [tiny footstep]
38.5.1 **FX: KINKO-N KINKO-N** [doorbell/intercom]
38.5.2 **FX: CHIRIN** [bell jingling]
38.5.3 **FX: CHIRIRIN** [bell jingling]
39.1 **FX: CHIRIN** [bell jingling]
39.4 **FX: KINKO-N** [doorbell]
39.6 **FX: GAKON GOTON** [stomping away]
39.7 **FX: BUROOON OOOON** [car speeding away]
39.8 **FX: KACHA** [hanging up]
40.1.1 **FX: GOGOON** [cars]
40.1.2 **FX: DODODO** [city noises]
40.1.3 **FX: PI-PO PI-PO** [sirens]
40.2 **FX: OGYAAAA OGYAAA** [baby noises]
40.3 **FX: OGYAAAA OGYAAA** [baby noises]
40.5 **FX: OGYAAA NGYAAA** [baby noises]
40.6 **FX: OGYAAA** [baby noises]
40.7 **FX: OGYAAA** [baby noises]
40.8 **FX: ONGYAAA OGYAAA** [baby noises]
41.1.1 **FX: NGYAAA** [baby noises]
41.1.2 **FX: ONGYAAA** [baby noises]
41.1.3 **FX: OGYAAA** [baby noises]
41.2.1 **FX: OGYAAA** [baby noises]

41.2.2 **FX: NGYAAA** [baby noises]
41.2.3 **FX: ONGYAAA** [baby noises]
41.4 **FX: KINKO-N** [doorbell]
41.6.1 **FX: KINKO-N** [doorbell]
41.6.2 **FX: KINKO-N** [doorbell]
41.8 **FX: KACHA** [receiver being lifted]
42.4 **FX: GASHA!** [receiver slamming]
42.6 **FX: GACHA GACHA** [knob rattling]
42.7 **FX: DON DON DON** [knocking]
43.1.1 **FX (big): DON DON DON** [knocking]
43.2.2 **FX (small): GACHA KACHA GACHA GACHA KACHA** [knob rattling]
43.2.1 **FX: TATA!** [running]
43.2.2 **FX: GI!** [chair squeaking]
43.3.1 **FX: DON DON** [knocking]
43.3.2 **FX: GACHA GACHA KACHA GACHA** [knob rattling]
43.4.1 **FX: DON DON** [knocking]
43.4.2 **FX: GACHA GACHA KACHA GACHA** [knob rattling]
44.2 **FX: BA!** [startled/whisking]
44.4 **FX: DORO . . .** [dripping]
45.2 **FX: GACHI!** [door locking]
45.3 **FX: BACHI!** [latch turning]
45.4 **FX: SHAAAA** [curtains whisking/shutting]
45.5 **FX: GARA!** [door sliding]
45.6 **FX: BAN!** [door slamming shut]
47.1 **FX: GOPON** [toilet gurgling]
47.2.1 **FX: GOBOBO!** [toilet gurgling]
47.2.2 **FX: GOBO!** [toilet gurgling]
47.2.3 **FX: GABO!** [toilet gurgling]
47.2.4 **FX: GOPO!** [toilet gurgling]
47.3 **FX: GOPON** [toilet gurgling]
47.4 **FX: KOTO** [toilet seat lifting]
48.1 **FX: DORORI** [dripping/oozing]
FX: GOBOBO! [toilet gurgling]
50.1 **FX: BA!** [ghost springing out]
50.2 **FX: BA! BA!** [hands and arms whisking]
51.1 **FX: BA!** [plunging back into toilet]
51.3-4: The holy cards placed in the corners of the room have small piles of salt upon them, an ancient symbol of purification—perhaps because salt was the first known way to slow the decay of dead flesh, preserving meat for eating. This would have a special and macabre significance for Mikoto, of course.
52.1.1 **FX: GAYA GAYA** [ruckus]
52.1.2 **FX: ZAWA ZAWA** [commotion]
52.4 **FX: DORO . . .** [dripping/oozing]
52.5 **FX: GYU!** [shirking/clenching]
53.3 **FX: GA!** [tripping]
53.4 **FX: ZUZAA!** [skidding]
53.5 **FX: KARA KARA** [phone sliding]
56.1 **FX: KO! KO!** [hollow footsteps]
56.2 **FX: KACHA** [sound of flip phone opening]
56.3 **FX: PI! PI!** [sound of button being pushed]
57.4 **FX: GO-!** [bath machine humming]
58.4 **FX: PI** [phone being shut off]
59.1 **FX: KOTON** [phone being placed down]
59.2.1 **FX: ZABAA** [water dripping]
59.2.2 **FX: PASHA PASHA** [splashing]
59.4.1 **FX: PIPOPA PIPOPO!** [phone noises]
59.4.2 **FX: PIPOPA PIPOPO!** [phone noises]
59.5.1 **FX: PIPOPA PIPOPO!** [phone noises]
59.5.2 **FX: PIPOPA PIPOPO!** [phone noises]
59.6 **FX: PIPA!** [phone noise]
60.1 **FX: PA!** [screen flashing picture appearing]
61.3 **FX: SHAAA** [shower]
61.5 **FX: PI PI PI PI** [buttons beeping]
61.6 **FX: KOTO!** [phone being put down]
61.8 **FX: PIPOPO PIPOPO PIPOPO PIPOPO** [incoming mail]
62.4.1 **FX: JAN JAN JAN JAN JAN** [ring tone]
62.4.2 **FX: JA-N JAKA JAKA JA JA-N** [ring tone]
62.5 **FX: PI!** [sound of button being pushed]
67.4 **FX: BU!** [phone buzzing/shorting/cutting out]
67.6.1 **FX: PIPOPA PIPOPO** [ring tone for mail]
67.6.2 **FX: PIPOPA PIPOPO** [ring tone for mail]
67.6.3 **FX:PIPOPA PIPOPO** [ring tone for mail]
67.7 **FX: PI!** [sound of button being pushed]
68.1 **FX: PA!** [screen changing/flicking on]
68.4 **FX: GACHA** [door clicking]
69.1.1 **FX: PIPOPA PIPOPO PIPOPA** [ring tone for mail]
69.1.2 **FX: PIPOPA PIPOPO PIPOPA PIPOPO** [ring tone for mail]
69.3 **FX: PIPA** [sound of button being pressed]
70.1.1 **FX: PIPOPA PIPOPO** [ring tone for mail]
70.1.2 **FX: PIPOPA PIPOPO** [ring tone for mail]
70.1.3 **FX: PIPOPA PIPOPO** [ring tone for mail]
70.3 **FX:PI-**[extended beep/shutting off phone]
70.4 **FX: PETA** [slumping to the ground]

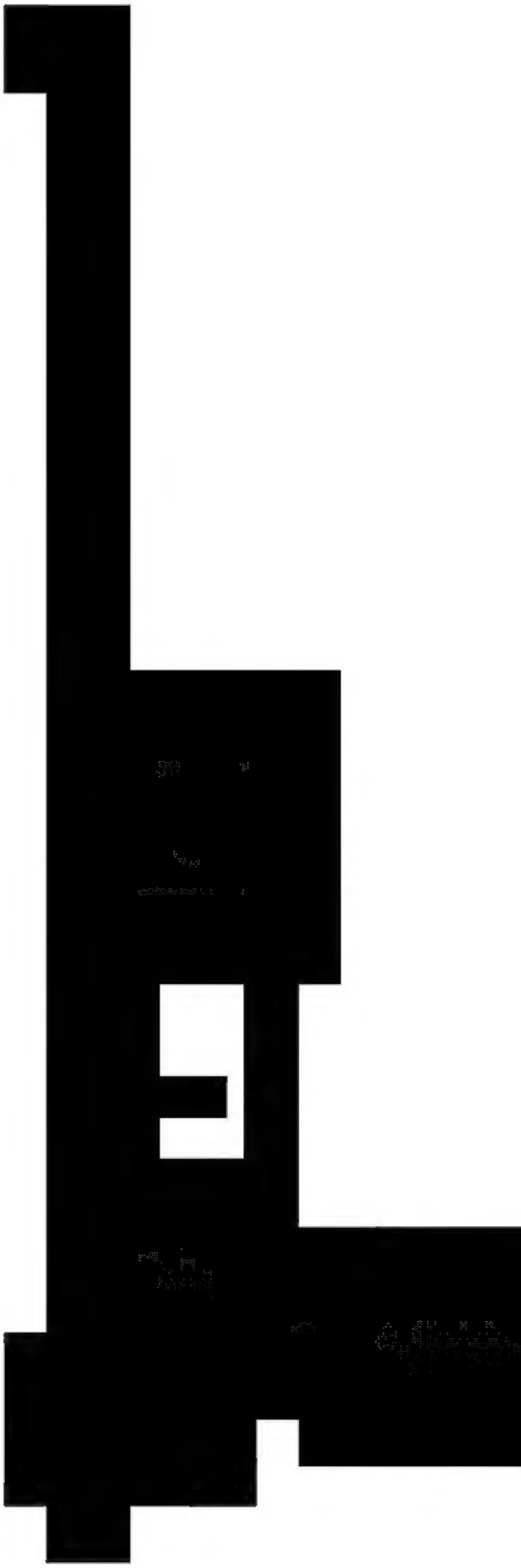
70.7 **FX: PA** [screen coming on]
71.1.1 **FX: PIPOPA PIPOPO PIPOPA** [ring tone for mail]
71.1.2 **FX: PIPOPO** [ring tone for mail]
71.1.3 **FX: PIPOPO PIPOPO PIPOPA PIPOPO** [ring tone for mail]
71.2 **FX: BA!** [hand whisking/grabbing phone]
71.3 **FX: DOKA!** [phone hitting wall]
71.4 **FX: KATA!** [landing on floor]
71.5.1 **FX: PIPOPO PIPOPA PIPOPO** [ring tone for mail]
71.5.2 **FX: PIPOPO PIPOPA PIPOPO** [ring tone for mail]
71.6 **FX: PIPOPO PIPOPA PIPOPO** [ring tone for mail]
71.7 **FX: PIPOPO PA** [ring tone for mail]
71.8.1 **FX: PIPOPA PIPOPO** [ring tone for mail]
71.8.2 **FX: PIPOPA PIPOPO** [ring tone for mail]
71.8.3 **FX: PIPOPA PIPOPO PIPOPA** [ring tone for mail]
72.7 **FX: SU!** [hand whisking/picking up phone]
72.8 **FX: PIPA!** [button pushed/message appearing]
73.1 **FX: PI!** [button being pushed]
73.4 **FX: PI!** [button being pushed]
73.7 **FX: GOKU!** [gulping/hard swallow]
73.9 **FX: PI!** [button being pushed]
75.2 **FX: SU!** [arms whisking to shiver]
75.3 **FX: BA!** [head whisking]
75.5 **FX: POTA POTA!** [faucet dripping]
75.2 **FX: GOOOOO** [heater running]
76.1 **FX: MISHI MISHI** [groaning]
76.4 **FX: MISHI MISHI** [groaning]
76.6 **FX: PI!** [button being pushed]
76.7 **FX: PA!** [screen coming alive]
77.3 **FX: SU!** [phone whisking]
80.2 **FX: DON DON DON** [knocking]
80.3 **FX: GACHA!** [door opening]
81.3 **FX: BA!** [hand whisking to grab phone]
81.4 **FX: DO!** [phone hitting floor]
81.5.1 **FX: GAKI!** [phone cracking]
81.5.2 **FX: BAKI!** [phone cracking]
81.6 **FX: BAKI GAKI!** [phone cracking]
81.7 **FX: SUU** [ghost creeping]
82.1 **FX: SUUUU** [ghost appearing]
82.2 **FX: GIRORI** [glaring]
83.1 **FX: SU** [gun whisking up]
83.2 **FX: SHAKO** [chamber loading]
83.4 **FX: DOOON** [gun firing]
83.5 **FX: UGYAAA!** [ghostly shriek]
84.1 **FX: KYUUUU** [bullet whizzing]
84.2 **FX: KON KON KOON** [bullet hitting ground]
85.3 **FX: CHU CHU** [suckling]
87.1 **FX: PIPO- PIPO- PIPO-** [sirens]
88.2 The "K" is most likely a reference to a Kadokawa Book Store (Kadokawa being the original publisher of *Mail*; a sign for such a store is actually hanging from the bus stop in the first panel of page 164). Tokyo is divided into twenty-three wards with a high degree of self-government. Akiba's mention of "T" ward is a reference either to Taito (in central Tokyo) or Toshima (to the northwest). Probably the best known of Tokyo's wards outside of Japan (and the editor's favorite) is Shinjuku; the Beastie Boys shot their video for "Intergalactic" in Shinjuku Station. Although "wards" is the official translation of the Japanese original *ku*, many of the wards themselves use "City" in English, and, with individual populations reaching into the hundreds of thousands, they indeed qualify.
89.3 **FX: GA-!** [door opening]
90.3 **FX: CHARA** [keys jangling]
90.6 **FX: SA!** [head turning]
91.6 **FX: BATAN** [door shutting]
92.1 This hotel room seems quite spacious by Japanese standards, even though it's no bigger than what you might expect at an American Motel 6. In downtown Tokyo, hotels can be incredibly cruel; the lobby may seem of expected size, but when you get up to your room you find it's half, or even a third as big as what you'd get for the same money in the U.S. This isn't the end to the surprises; whereas the humblest hotel in America would have a clock-radio of some kind, in 2001 the editor stayed at a moderate joint in Tokyo—the home of the world's most advanced consumer electronics—that bizarrely restricted your listening choice to three radio channels only, which you could turn either on or off with mounted toggle switches!

92.2 **FX: SU** [whisking off glasses]
92.3 **FX: TOSU** [glasses hitting bed]
93.1 **FX: GOTO!** [computer placed down]
93.2 **FX: KACHI** [plug clicking in]
93.3 **FX: PACHIN** [latch]
93.4 **FX: KATA KATATA** [typing]
94.1 **FX: KACHI!** [clicking]
94.2 **FX: PAPA!** [page loading]
94.3 There are several cities that start with an "N" in Chiba Prefecture, but the most likely candidate is Narita City, home of Tokyo's major metropolitan airport, Narita International.
94.6 **FX: SA!** [head turning]
97.2 **FX: GU!** [hand clenching]
97.6.1 **FX: SA!** [phone whisking]
97.6.2 **FX: PI! PI! PI!** [buttons being pushed]
97.8 **FX: KACHA** [receiver being picked up]
98.1 **FX: PURURURURU PURURURURU** [phone ringing]
98.2 **FX: KACHA** [receiver being picked up]
98.4 **FX: PI!** [button being pushed]
98.6 **FX: SU!** [whisking phone up]
99.2 **FX: KASHA** [receiver being put down]
100.3 **FX: KU!** [clenching sheets]
100.5 **FX: PURURURURU PURURURURU** [phone ringing]
101.1 Having a.) worked as a waiter, and b.) spent over a year of his life in hotels, the editor can't quite grasp why room service is so expensive. Dig: a regular waiter is expected to carry trays to your table by hand, and from then on keep an eye out during the meal, coming back to refill your water or coffee, add fresh bread, and so forth. A room service waiter, by contrast, rides up the elevator with the meal on a cart, waits a few seconds hoping for an extra tip (which would be the third one, considering the standard 17% room service "surcharge" and $2.00 "delivery fee") and then vanishes like the RCA SelectaVision. I'm sorry to go off on this *Seinfeld*-like rant, but better Jerry than Kramer.
101.4 **FX: DOSA** [sitting down]
101.8 **FX: KACHA!** [clicking]
102.4 **FX: POTA POTATA** [tears falling]
102.5 **FX: KYU! KYU KYU** [creaking]
102.6 **FX: KYU! KYU KYU!** [creaking]
103.1 **FX: KACHA!** [door opening]
103.4 **FX: KYU KYU** [creaking]
FX: SUU [disappearing]
104.5 **FX: TATATA!** [running]
105.2.1 **FX: GATA** [rattling]
105.2.2 **FX: KATAN** [rattling]
105.4.1 **FX: BIRI!** [tearing/ripping]
105.4.2 **FX: KUSHA KUSHA** [crumpling]
105.7.1 **FX: KYU** [squeaking]
105.7.2 **FX: KYU KYU!** [squeaking]
106.1.1 **FX: KII** [creaking]
106.1.2 **FX: KYU** [wheels squeaking]
106.1.3 **FX: KYU KYU** [wheels squeaking]
107.1 **FX: KII!** [creaking]
111.1 **FX: HYUN** [whizzing into body]
111.4.1 **FX: GU GU** [clenching/squeezing]
111.4.2 **FX: GU!** [squeezing]
112.2 **FX: KOTSU!** [heavy footstep]
113.1 **FX: SU!** [gun whisking]
113.2 **FX: KASHA** [clip loading]
113.4 **FX: KACHI** [latch clicking]
113.5 **FX: NUUUU** [ghost flying out]
114.1 **FX: DON** [gun firing]
114.2 **FX: BISHI!** [piercing ghost]
114.3 **FX: HYUN** [whizzing out of body]
115.7 **FX: KYUUN** [bullet whizzing]
116.1 **FX: POTO!** [bullet landing on bed]
116.3 **FX: SU** [hand whisking up bullet]
121.4 **FX: ZAZAA** [water lapping]
124.1.1 **FX: GATA** [gravel rattling]
124.1.2 **FX: GOTO** [lumbering along]
124.1.3 **FX: GASA** [rustling]
124.2 **FX: GII** [brakes creaking]
124.3 **FX: ZAZAAN** [sound of the ocean]
125.1 Possibly because it may not exist, but Calavera Cave on the north end of Saipan, for which this beach is named, is very much real. With only one hour's time difference, Saipan is a popular and relatively cheap foreign destination (Saipan, like Puerto Rico, is a U.S. Commonwealth) for Japanese tourists—a family of three from Tokyo can spend three nights and four days there for about 155,000 yen (this includes the travel expenses—10,000 yen of which alone is just getting to the airport along Japan's notorious toll roads!), much cheaper and with less jet lag than, say,

a trip to Hawaii. However, Saipan is also haunted by the memories, if not the ghosts, of the terrible battle between U.S. and Japanese forces that took place there in 1944, a tragedy surpassed only by the still more terrible film made about it, *Windtalkers*. If John Woo makes a film about Nicolas Cage defeating the Japanese, I go in expecting it to be done in proper John Woo style, with Nic leaping sideways in slow motion holding a gun in each hand, wiping out General Yoshitsugu's entire Imperial 17th Independent Mortar Battalion with round after round from his twin smoking Beretta 92s.

125.5 **FX: ZAZA-N** [surf]
128.5 **FX: ZAAAN ZAZAAN** [sound of surf]
128.6 **FX: ZAZAAAN** [sound of ocean]
129.1 **FX: DOPOON** [bottle dropping in ocean]
129.2 **FX: PUKA** [bottle floating/bobbing]
129.3 **FX: YURA YURARI** [bottle bobbing]
129.4 **FX: GOPO** [bottle glugging/sinking]
129.5 **FX: GOKU** [gulping/hard swallow]
129.7 **FX: ZAZAZAZA** [waves crashing]
130.3 **FX: JAN JAKA JAJAN** [phone ringing]
130.4 **FX: JAN JAKA JAJAN** [phone ringing]
131.1 **FX: GACHA!** [door opening]
132.6 **FX: ZAZAAAN** [sound of surf]
134.2 **FX: PATAN** [flip phone closing]
134.3 **FX: BAN!** [door slamming]
134.4 **FX: ZAAAAN ZAAAN** [roar of ocean]
134.7 **FX: GOPO** [plunking underwater]
134.8 **FX: BASHA BASHA** [splashing]
135.1 **FX: BASHA BASHA** [splashing]
135.3.1 **FX: ZAAAN** [ocean]
135.3.2 **FX: ZAAAN** [ocean]
135.3.3 **FX: ZAAAN** [ocean]
135.4.1 **FX: ZAAN** [ocean]
135.4.2 **FX: ZAAAN** [ocean]
135.5 **FX: ZAAAN** [ocean]
135.7 **FX: ZA ZA ZA** [surf]
136.1.1 **FX: ZAAAN** [ocean]
136.1.2 **FX: ZAAAN** [ocean]
136.2 **FX: CHAPO** [dipping in water]
136.3 **FX: DOPON** [plunging into water]
137.3 **FX: ZABA!** [splashing]
137.4 **FX: BASHA BASHA** [splashing]
138.4.1 **FX: ZAZAA** [ocean]
138.4.2 **FX: ZAAAN** [ocean]
138.5 **FX: SORO** [creeps]
138.6 **FX: YURARI** [floating]
139.1 **FX: GOPON** [bottle plunging out of water]
139.3 **FX: BASHA BASHA BASHA** [splashing]
139.4 **FX: BASHA BASHA** [splashing]
139.5 **FX: BASHA** [splashing]
144.1 **FX: GUI!** [grabbing]
144.2 **FX: GUGU!** [grabbing]
145.2 **FX: KACHI KACHI KACHI** [bullets loading]
145.3 **FX: SHAKON** [clip being loaded]
145.4 **FX: KACHIRI** [latch being flipped]
145.6 **FX: GOPUN** [sinking under water]
146.2 **FX: DON DON DON** [gun firing]
147.1.1 **FX: BICHUUN** [bullet flying through water]
147.1.2 **FX: CHUUN** [bullet flying through water]
147.2 **FX: BISHI** [bullet piercing]
147.3 **FX: BISHI** [bullet piercing]
147.4.1 **FX: BI!** [bullet piercing]
147.4.2 **FX: BISHI!** [bullet piercing]
147.5 **FX: OOOOO . . .** [moaning of ghosts]
148.1 **FX: AA** [moan of ghost]
148.2 **FX: GYUN** [bullet whirling]
148.3 **FX: GOPO GOPOPO** [bullets sinking]
148.4 **FX: ZAZAZA** [jet ski whizzing]
148.5 **FX: PUKARI** [floating]
149.2 **FX: ZABA** [splashing]
150.1 **FX: GOBOBOBO** [sinking]
150.2 **FX: SU!** [gun whisking]
150.3 **FX: KACHI KACHI KACHI** [gun clicking/firing nothing]
151.1 **FX: GOPOPO** [sinking]
FX: ZAZAAAN [ocean]
153.6 **FX: ZAPA!** [plunging out of water]
157.6 Sugar sticks (the original Japanese actually uses the English words, pronounced *shugaa suteikku*) are one of the many small elegances of Japanese society; instead of our inefficient flat packets of sugar, where you have to knead and shake to get the stuff out, you simply tear one end and tilt it into your coffee.
164.4.1 **FX: GACHA** [key entering lock]
164.4.2 **FX: KANYAN** [lock opening]
164.5 **FX: GARARA . . .** [door sliding open]
165.2.1 **FX: CHIKA CHIKA** [light flickering]
165.2.2 **FX: PA!** [light flashing on]

165.4.1 **FX: VOOON** [machine starting up]
165.4.2 **FX: GOTOTO** [rumbling]
165.4.3 **FX: BIKU** [Miwa startled]
165.5 **FX: KOTOTO** [rumbling]
165.6 **FX: BATAN** [door slamming]
166.2 **FX: PASA!** [clothes ruffling]
167.5 **FX: PI!** [button pushed/ power turned on]
168.1 **FX: KATA KATA KATATA** [sound of typing]
170.2 There are two Japanese coins that have a hole in it, but the cool one, and the coolest of all Japanese coins, is the one used here, the five-yen piece. About two-thirds copper and one-third zinc, it gleams like dull gold (Hideaki Anno designed the rocket in *Royal Space Force* to have that five-yen sheen), is the oldest Japanese coin design (in continuous use since 1949), and is also the only one whose inscription is entirely in Japanese, using only kanji for its numerals.
170.3 **FX: GARA!** [drawer opening]
170.5 **FX: PURAN** [string stretching]
171.4 **FX: SU!** [pendulum swinging]
172.4 **FX: KURU KURUN KURUN** [twirling]
172.6 **FX: SU!** [stopping]
172.7 **FX: KURUN KURUN** [twirling]
173.1 **FX: GATA!** [getting up from desk]
173.2 **FX: HIRA** [paper floating down/settling]
173.3 **FX: KACHA** [door opening]
173.5 **FX: JARANRA JARANRA JAN JAKA JAKA** [ring tone]
173.6 **FX: JANJA JAKA JAN** [ring tone]
173.7 **FX: PI!** [button being pushed]
175.6 **FX: BATAN** [door slamming]
176.3 **FX: BA!** [whisking away/turning quickly]
181.1.1 **FX: DA TA TA!** [running]
181.1.2 **FX: GACHA** [door knob opening]
181.2 **FX: GATA!** [rattling]
181.4 **FX: NUU!** [creeping/drifting out]
182.1 **FX: GOKI** [neck crackling]
182.2 **FX: GOKI GOKIN** [neck crackling]
182.3 **FX: GURU GURUN** [head spinning]
184.1 **FX: SUCHA!** [gun whisking upwards]
184.4 **FX: FU!** [eyes fluttering back into head]
184.5 **FX: DO!** [hitting floor]
185.3 **FX: NUUU** [creeping/floating]
186.1 **FX: PAAAAAN** [gun firing]
186.4 **FX: GARA!** [door sliding]



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Haunted cell phones, hotel rooms of horror, and the drowned dead are all laid to rest as *Mail* concludes with Detective Akiba taking a trip down memory lane—the dark path of his blind youth, when he befriended a little girl in the woods, not knowing that he would one day *see* her—again, and under very different circumstances!

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